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NEW STATESMAN

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

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The Hitlerwave

Young Germans involved with a dangerous memory

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JUL 6 1973

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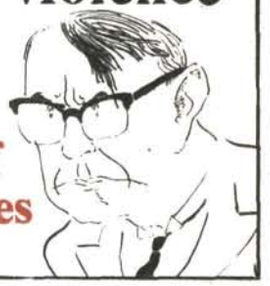
Profile: the Editor of The Times



The Codebreaker's War

Cricket at Fenner's

Company Directors: A Special Case?

It might seem a little over-generous in these Phase Three days to give company directors on £20,000 an across-the-board pay rise of 23.5 per cent. It would cause chaos at the other end of the scale if engineers or catering workers or dockers began demanding the same rate of increase for themselves. Surely no government in its right mind would allow such a thing. But in fact that is just what the new budget has done for Britain's highest earners.

A company director on £20,000 will receive a cash increase of £948 per annum. If that figure had instead been added to his gross salary it would have represented a pay rise of 9.9 per cent. But that of course would be taxed – so how much extra would he have needed to earn (before the budget) to get an increase of that size in his *net* pay? This is the arithmetic which has not so far been done in public and it reveals that the company director would have needed a pay rise of £4,695 in order to put into his pocket the sum which has just been handed to him by Mr Healey, courtesy of the Tory, Liberal, Nationalist and Ulster Unionist MPs. It represents a salary increase of 23.5 per cent.

We have a habit of talking about tax and salaries as if the two bore no relation to each other. We argue about whether or not wages should be restrained and, if so, by how much and for how long. Then we argue quite separately – and usually at a different time of year – about whether or not there should be a penny a pound off income tax and at what level higher rates should be imposed. Separately again, we argue about the levels of national insurance contributions and welfare benefits. Yet all the time what really counts is take-home pay.

It is handy for the Tories and handier still for the Liberals who love to be seen as champions of the Little Person, that this separation of arguments can obscure the motive behind their fiscal adjustments. How many taxpayers know what the Tory amendments to Healey's budget are worth when translated from tax concessions into wage increases? How many people know they represent pay rises for the well-to-do far in excess of the Phase Three limits?

There are those who feel company directors are a hard done-by lot. Indeed, it must be dispiriting to know that one would have to add the gross wages of two junior office clerks to one's own in order to get one's hands on a paltry 18 quid a week. But before we take to the streets in defence of the boardroom, how have the lower paid fared?

The skilled craftsman on £5,000 will receive a cash increase of £89. Before the budget he would only have needed a 2.7 per cent pay rise to get that. The waitress or the office clerk on £2,500 has fared a little better, relatively speaking. She will get an extra £77 and that represents a 4.7 per cent wage increase in pre-budget terms. A full table is printed overleaf: it shows that the budget has brought very little in hard cash to those earning less than £10,000. The real rewards start there – and get bigger and better higher up the scale. Approximately 97 per cent of the working population earn less than £10,000 a year.

One cannot lay all the blame on the Tories and their allies. Healey's original budget proposals gave £69 in extra cash to a single person earning £2,500 per annum and £466 to the company director on £20,000, which was not a great stride forward for socialism. Sir Geoffrey Howe then gave them a further £8 and £482 respectively.

Let us assume for a minute that Britain's higher paid workers really do need more incentives, and bear in mind that North Sea divers will also be getting the big handouts if they have not all gone into exile. Even if the government can be excused for paying out the money – and in our view it cannot – what remains inexcusable is that a payment of this proportion has been made without the public knowing its real significance. Will Phase Four (if it should come) allow a 23.5 per cent increase for the lower paid?

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Notes on Politics and Power

Out-spooking the CIA

The new game for the media in the United States is to beat the CIA at clandestine operations. At the beginning of last week, the entire agency and its former director William Colby were caught on the hop by a joint operation of CBS television and publishers W. W. Norton. Their mission – accomplished fully – was to publish the account of US military intervention in Angola, about which the CIA had systematically lied to the US Congress. A book documenting the use of $30 million worth of covert funds to supply mercenaries and arms to Angola, entitled *In Search of Enemies*, was written by a former clandestine services agent and Head of the CIA Angola Task Force, John Stockwell.

Stockwell is the latest in a long line of former agents who have exposed their profession to the world. They have often encountered difficulties. The first, Philip Agee, wrote his *CIA Diary* in exile and continues as an international refugee after being forced to leave Britain. Two other writers, Marcheth and Marks, had their manuscript impounded by the CIA which then enforced deletions. The book was published full of Nixonesque parentheses – '5½ LINES DELETED' (on CIA orders). To avoid prior restraint on publication, the last two such works, including Stockwell's, have been published in a manner more suited to the CIA itself than a publisher.

The key to the operation, Norton explained, was speed and not cast-iron security. Instead of the normal lackadaisical year long delays in most publishing, they had thousands of books printed and bound within two weeks of receiving the manuscript. Five days before CBS featured Stockwell and his revelations on their Sunday prime time documentary show, *Sixty Minutes*, trucks took the 18,000 copies of the book to warehouses all over the United States. The morning after CBS splashed the story, the books were posted, still unidentified, to every shop. The US political and legal system would not then afford the CIA any opportunity to fight a rearguard action to maintain secrecy. Former director Colby moaned: 'You can't run an intelligence agency if every junior officer decides which secrets to keep.'

Colby had been beautifully landed in a bunker by CBS. As the deadline for publication approached, they filmed an interview with the former CIA chief about the content of Stockwell's book – without him realising what they were really talking about. The next Sunday, his denials of CIA involvement were out with Stockwell's descriptions of the planning and financing of armies and armouries for Angola. (It was precisely those actions which triggered countervailing Soviet and Cuban intervention.)

The CIA will probably exact what pound of flesh it can from Stockwell. They are already suing another former analyst, Frank Snepp, for revelations about the Vietnam debacles. Both he and Stockwell have infringed secrecy oaths sworn to the CIA. They cannot seek to imprison them, but they do aspire to make such memoir writing less than profitable.

No such problems face William Colby. He has just written the authorised version, officially cleared by CIA headquarters. This will be called *Honourable Men – My Life in the CIA*. It may be that the truer honour goes to the renegade agents and their publishers.

Political gunpower in India

Mervyn Jones writes: Bailadila is a remote spot in the middle of India where iron ore is mined to meet a Japanese contract. The workers, coming from yet more remote villages, live in a makeshift camp. Recently the Japanese reduced demand, causing unemployment; a strike began. When police came to arrest the union leader while he was addressing a meeting, fighting broke out and a policeman was killed. Police reinforcements then went through the camp, shooting wherever people had gathered. A reputable journalist, reaching Bailadila 10 days later, reached a figure of 100 as a sober estimate of the deaths from police bullets; the authorities admit 10 killed. The reporter also found 1,500 people missing out of the work-force of 5,000. Either they were injured and being nursed in their villages, or they preferred to keep away from Bailadila in the prevailing atmosphere of fear.

This event on 10 April is only the latest in a sequence. It has become normal for the police and para-military forces, whose strength and weaponry have increased fast over the last 10 years, to use the gun to break strikes or disperse demonstrations. Notable incidents have been at Agra, at the major industrial centre of Kanpur, and at the farm attached to Pantnagar Agricultural University. Most of the shootings (though not Bailadila) have been in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state. In this state, though it's difficult to arrive at accurate figures, it's alleged that 300 men and women have been shot dead since the Janata Government took office in March 1977.

Formerly a Congress stronghold, Uttar Pradesh swung to Janata in landslide fashion in the March 1977 election; the new party captured every seat, and this was the main factor in producing its parliamentary majority. It was the voters' verdict on Indira Gandhi's emergency rule, with its inroads on human rights and its police shootings. After the poll, people happily celebrated the return of freedom. They didn't expect that, a year later, they would again be mourning their dead. Uttar Pradesh is the home state, and now the political fief, of Charan Singh, who as Home Minister commands the forces of order. He wields considerable power in Janata and, though in his seventies and at the moment in hospital, has ambitions to succeed Morarji Desai as Prime Minister. Lately he endured a setback when, against his will, the laws permitting detention without trial were repealed. When I interviewed him in January and asked a question about this issue, he said: 'People who want that are idealists' – clearly using the word as a term of contempt.

After the shooting at Pantnagar, community leaders begged Charan Singh and other Janata Ministers to visit the place and hear at first hand what had happened. None of them did so, but Mrs Gandhi was quickly on the spot, and being photographed consoling widows and orphans. Considering that police guns were rattling merrily away while she was Prime Minister, the gesture may be thought cynical – but the blame rests equally on those who gave her this golden opportunity for political capital.

Truth and Bernard Levin

James Fenton writes: Bernard Levin's journalism has two modes only – vituperation and gush. For the victims of his sycophancy it must be like being hosed down with maple syrup. For the rest of us, the objects of his scorn, it's like being pelted with cess. In his article last week, 'The evil that men do, and the men who call it good' (*The*

If tax cuts were pay rises . . .

Amendments to Healey's budget: their effect on net incomes and what they represent in terms of gross salary increases, for a single person, inclusive of personal tax allowance and national insurance. (See leader overleaf.)

Salary	*Pre-budget net pay*	*Post-budget net pay*	*Gross salary needed for post-budget net pay at pre-budget tax rates*	*Increase in gross salary* £	%
2,500	1,827	1,904	2,617	117	4·7
5,000	3,334	3,423	5,135	135	2·7
10,000	6,266	6,607	10,816	816	8·2
15,000	8,208	8,929	17,517	2,517	16·8
20,000	9,555	10,503	24,692	4,692	23·5
25,000	10,560	11,752	32,039	7,039	28·2

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Times, 10 May), my views on Cambodia are placed on a par with those of a man who insists that the entire story of the Nazi extermination of the Jews was a fake. How is this bold foreshortening, this trick photography achieved? By a very old method.

Mr Levin quotes my sentence (from NS 6 January):

> The practice of beating people to death made sound sense in an economy where bullets were scarce.

This sentence is also repeated, with a minor change of tense and without the customary three dots at the end, in bold type at the head of the article.

It is a shocking sentence, and it was intended to shock. But it did not represent my view. It came at the end of an account of a society run by children, in which the ideology 'had to be such as an unschooled child could grasp'. For instance: 'If there was little decent housing, that was because people who lived in large houses exploited the poor.' This was Khmer Rouge ideology, not my personal opinion.

I went on:

> Nor were the forms of cruelty haphazard. The practice of beating people to death made sound sense in an economy where bullets were scarce, and it unfortunately happens to be true that, if you get into the habit of killing people, you will find in the end that you like it.

It made sense, that is, to the young Khmer Rouge warriors – it was a simple idea, by which they were brutalised. The word Cambodia, I wrote, 'stands for the way in which the possibility of a good society can be destroyed'. What enrages Mr Levin is my view that the first blame for this destruction – not the only blame, the first blame – lies with the Americans. It is a point which I am prepared to argue – but it is difficult to argue with a liar.

Professionals in retreat

Tim Albert writes: The selection of a new chief education officer for the county of Berkshire is likely to be followed with more than usual interest by his (or less likely, her) future colleagues. The reason is the unusual wording of the advertisements, which made it clear that the county was quite happy to have an administrator rather than an educator. It called the job Director of Educational Services, made no reference to experience of education, and instead asked for 'substantial managerial experience'. A notice to applicants stated that the job was 'not necessarily confined to persons with a professional education background.'

The Society of Education Officers promptly sent a delegation to Berkshire, which won an assurance from the council that it was 'envisaged that the successful candidate will have wide knowledge and experience in education.' The closing date for application was Wednesday this week, and the selection is due to take place in June

The incident is not an isolated one, and reflects an increasingly bitter power struggle between the administrative generalists and the educational specialists in our local authorities. Although some say it has been going on for over 30 years, it was given legitimacy by the 1972 Bains Report on the management of local government, which advocated corporate management, and argued that chief education officers were managers, and didn't need to have a professional base, although this was specifically rejected by parliament. Indeed, since then, two chief education officers (for Oldham and Avon) and one chairman of an education committee (for Bedfordshire) have resigned over the issue.

Furthermore there has been considerable erosion since 1974 of the powers of education departments. Research carried out for the SEO by Geoffrey Winter, former chief education officer for North Riding and principal lecturer at Sheffield City Polytechnic, shows what he calls 'evidence of considerable waste of manpower, time and effort arising out of the management practices of authorities. A cumbersome, arbitrary, insensitive bureaucracy has been imposed'.

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Tana de Zulueta Italian Electors Vote for Aldo Moro

Nearly 4 million Italians turned out at the beginning of this week to vote in local elections. Scarcely five days had passed since the corpse of Aldo Moro was cynically dumped by the Red Brigade only a few steps from the Communist and Christian Democrat headquarters in Rome. Without doubt, the appalling tragedy weighed on the voters in various provinces all over Italy and the DC predictably got the sympathy vote they expected. But it was also the first test of public opinion since the Communists joined the governing majority in March.

Of all the parties, it was the PCI who waited most apprehensively for the results to come in. With good reason. Besides the Christian Democrat gain, the drop in Communist votes is an ominous warning. Perhaps, only two years after the tremendous PCI gains of June '76, the tide is turning. Certainly the DC votes were votes for Moro. He was always respected, though perhaps too much of a 'Palace politician' to be warmly loved before his death. Now of course, he has his place in a Pantheon of Public Martyrs and his grave in the little village of Torrita Tiberina is snowed down with flowers from all over the country. Christian Democrat voters usually leave the streets and squares to the left-wing. But on the day Moro was found dead thousands of demonstrators chanted 'Moro, Moro' over and above the politicians' speeches in defence of democracy.

Nonetheless, if the DC resurgence shown by the elections is real, the fragile DC-PCI alliance stitched together by Moro himself before he was kidnapped, may well be in jeopardy. The DC leaders, headed by their party secretary Benigno Zaccagnini, have promised to stand by the present arrangement – whatever the election results. But there are already rumblings of dissent from the ranks.

The PCI leader Enrico Berlinguer says that it was no coincidence that the terrorists timed their attack just as his party entered the governing majority, and nor was it a coincidence that they chose as their victim the very man who brought it about. For the Communists, all this confirms that the Red Brigades are 'enemies of the working classes' and desperately opposed to their rise to power. Certainly the Red Brigades are dead against the 'historic compromise' which they see as a sell-out. They said so in the most gruesome way possible by leaving Moro's corpse on the very doorsteps of the two parties.

Paradoxically, many Italians echo Berlinguer's reasoning, but reach quite the opposite conclusion. For them Moro was killed because he made the fatal mistake of stretching out a friendly hand to the Communists. Many still don't distinguish between the exponents of an 'Armed Struggle for Communism' and the scrupulously democratic Long March to power which the PCI has set as its aim. Nor were they all convinced by Berlinguer's presence at the High Mass celebrated by the Pope in Moro's honour and by the red flags mingling with the white on the steps of the cathedral. In fact, the different flag-bearers had their backs turned firmly on each other. 'They're hypocrites' said a young Christian Democrat. 'Communists, all the same' added a stander-by. Some DC exponents canvassing round Rome didn't hesitate to pick up this cold war theme. They reminded their voters of the Russian tanks in the streets of Prague, but above all they blamed the left for 'giving birth' to terrorism. Terrorism was virtually the only theme of a hasty and muted electoral campaign. The background could hardly have been more tense. Every day yet another man was shot in the legs on his way to work. The Communists had no opportunity to discuss local themes and proclaimed the *'Buongoverno'*, the honest administration which had gradually won them Italy's most important towns. Instead, they campaigned for law and order. *'Terrorism fears a Communist vote'* ran one of their posters. Meanwhile the terrorists turned on them too. For the first time a trades unionist's car was burned in Bologna.

The PCI is giving all its support to the Government's anti-terrorist measures. For the Communists, the first priority at the moment is to somehow preserve the historic compromise. Berlinguer sees it as 'the only way to save this country'. So much so that criticism has become a luxury and the PCI leadership ask for no more than to fraternally join forces with their old opponents, even in local government, however corrupt the PCI themselves may have shown them to be in the past.

It's a sign of the times that no politician has drawn attention to the big trial against the ministers implicated in the Lockheed scandal which opened this month. For the first time in Italy, a politician may end up in jail for corruption. But nobody chooses to dwell on the sordid details of how generals and members of government squeezed 1 billion 300,000 dollars in bribes out of an aircraft company in order to buy a consignment of Hercules planes. Besides the two in the dock, most of the ministers at the time are still, after all, ministers today.

It is apparently too late to remind the Communists that one of the reasons why terrorism has taken such deep roots in Italy and new recruits cut their teeth every day by lobbing a bomb at police barracks, is that for 30 years the same political class has run the country with absolute impunity. Now, of course, the hope of some change is more remote than ever. The DC have survived every sort of political scandal, from corruption to covering up for the right-wing terrorists who killed 16 people with a bomb outside a bank in Milan in 1969. This is the party which the Communists are now loyally defending. No wonder that when Giorgio Napolitano of the PCI called for a Communist vote last week 'to give Italy a new mode of government', his words had a hollow ring. Disaffection to groups left of the Communists dates back to the first steps toward a historic compromise just after the June elections in 1976. It has grown steadily worse, particularly in the universities where for some time now Communists journalists have been in danger of being beaten up. But with the escalation of terrorism, the PCI have become tougher and tougher with any opposition to the left. They are all for closing the free radios and the most radical pamphlets. Nonetheless, the fact remains that they have won very little of what they promised in 1976. The same faces of 30 years standing are still in government. The Communists have dropped a much trumpeted project for a police union and in spite of grand demands for a 'new' management, the nationalised industries and banks are still firmly in the hands of DC appointees. The PCI may well have disappointed many of their voters.

The Christian Democrats, on the other hand, are congratulating themselves for electoral results which should help keep the Communists in their place. Somehow the uneasy alliance will last out the year – largely because as from July, Parliament cannot be dissolved until a new President is elected in January. After that many DC exponents can hope for nothing better than to see the Communists safely back in opposition. If the trend continues, they may get their way.

Meanwhile the war continues. On Monday the Red Brigades shot a company executive in Bologna. Shooting doctors and middle executives in the legs is perhaps the most demoralising weapon of all. None of these victims is important enough to get a police escort and they must feel desperately alone. The bank manager shot in Milan last week had stationed his wife on the balcony to give him an all-clear signal – to no avail. The Red Brigades must be preparing their blow against 'the heart of the state'. The uncomfortable question is: who next? When Enrico Berlinguer was asked on television whether he feared for his life he looked graver than ever. 'No more than any other citizen', he said. But he added, with a touch of pride; 'We Communists know we may have to sacrifice our lives'.

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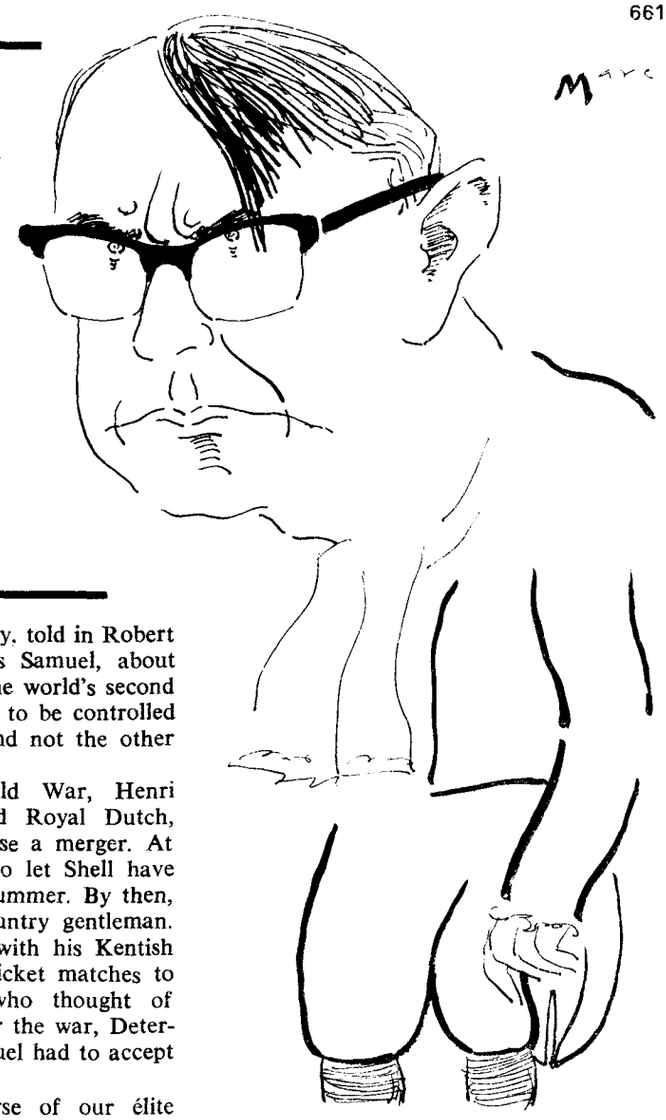
Profile: The Man of Judgment

William Rees-Mogg, The Editor of The Times, is prick'd by Her Majesty to become the High Sheriff of Somerset



The Times, it seems, if not yet actually out of the red, is now well on its way to being out of the woods. This must be specially exciting news for its editor, William Rees-Mogg. After more than a decade of the frustrations imposed by its dismal record of losing money, it is easy to imagine how eager he must be to hurl himself, like a giant refreshed, into the fourfold task he once said he set himself: to put the paper on a sound commercial basis; to improve its circulation; to modernise it; and to 'retain its authority.' He will be at least partially denied that satisfaction. A higher duty calls. He has been pricked – that is the correct term – like his father before him to serve Her Majesty as High Sheriff of the county of Somerset, where – to quote Burke's *Landed Gentry* – 'the family of Mogg have been landowners since the thirteenth century.' As a consequence, he will, it is understood, be taking less interest – the unkind might say *even* less interest – in the day to day running of *The Times*.

The duties of the sheriff theoretically include supervising parliamentary elections, summoning juries and carrying out court orders. Nowadays most of these jobs are done by the under-sheriff and his deputy (Deputy Mogg?), and it is the social duties of the office that have become onerous. One recent sheriff complained (or bragged) that he had been invited to 350 parties in his year of office.

The actual method by which sheriffs are chosen is not without interest, nor, indeed, without a certain symbolic appropriateness. Under the Sheriff's Act of 1887, by which Parliament modified a statute of Edward I, a sheriff is appointed annually 'having sufficient land within the county to answer the sovereign and the people.' The fact that the new sheriff of Somerset has just disposed of his Palladian mansion at Ston Easton for a sum in the region – as the estate agents say – of £175,000 is obviously not held to disqualify a man whose family have held land in the county since Edward I's time.

'When the yearly list of persons nominated for the office of sheriff is submitted to the Queen,' one authoritative account reads, 'she takes a silver bodkin and, to ensure impartiality, lets it fall upon one of the three names nominated. . . This is called pricking for sheriffs. In practice, persons whose names are pricked have been decided on beforehand, and there is really no element of chance in the matter.'

A man rises to the top of his profession. Then he goes back to his ancestral acres to receive his meed of honour. What is wrong with that? Well, for a start it reveals a certain sense of priorities. It says, clear enough; 'to me this ancient mumbo-jumbo, with no damned merit about it, except the merit of dramatising my credentials as a landed gentleman, is more important to me, at least at this moment, than the most influential job in my profession.' It is uncomfortably like the story, told in Robert Henriques' life of Marcus Samuel, about how Royal Dutch/Shell, the world's second biggest oil company, came to be controlled 60: 40 by Royal Dutch, and not the other way round.

Before the First World War, Henri Deterding, who controlled Royal Dutch, came to London to propose a merger. At that stage he was ready to let Shell have control. He came in the summer. By then, Samuel had become a country gentleman. He was simply too busy with his Kentish fêtes and charities and cricket matches to see Deterding, a man who thought of nothing but business. After the war, Deterding came back. And Samuel had to accept a minority position.

Amateurism is the curse of our élite and at its root is the conviction that it is better to be a gentleman than to do one's job as well as it can be done. This is specially bad in journalism, in a society which rewards journalists precisely in proportion to their willingness to run up little flags saying, 'Of course I'm not *really* a journalist.' It is specially unnecessary in a man like Rees-Mogg, who does not need to prove his gentility. And it is specially irritating in an editor of *The Times* who has spent so much ink (he doesn't like to type, of course) in berating British workers for not working hard enough.

So by accepting the bodkin's prick, Rees-Mogg has as good as dared us to ask just how well he has done in the eleven years since he became editor of *The Times*. When he took over, three things were almost universally said of him: that he was a kind and good man; that he was a liberal Tory who would be as intent on modernising the paper as his party; and that he was an unusually shrewd and perspicacious judge of men and politics.

He is still a kind and good man, those who have dealings with him insist, though in the way they say it there is an echo of what a truly and heroically good man, William Makepeace Thackeray, once wrote of a friend's brother: that he was 'a virtuous man – so good, sober and religious, such a fine English squire. If I had £3,000 a year, I think I'd be so too.' When Rees-Mogg writes, for example, in his declaration of faith, *An 'Umbler 'Eaven*, that in his beloved Victorian England, 'women were expected to be chaste and loyal, and the great majority were so,' as if there was an end of it, you realise not only that he is less well read in fiction and social history than he would have you believe, but also that here is a very limited imagination.

The liberal Tory has been trans-Moggrified into the squire, the monetary reactionary, the amateur mystic, the admirer of a rose-tinted eighteenth century and an even more imaginary, pre-Raphaelite nineteenth century when nothing troubled the virtuous, sober and religious life of the English gentleman and man of letters. There was a brief, springtime Mogg, who appeared on a television programme with Mick Jagger and wrote articles saying he knew of no arguments to convince young scientists that they would feel at home in the Tory party. Or was that merely trimmer Mogg, bending before the trend? Certainly *The Times* has been for some years now in practice, if not in name, a Conservative newspaper, and a paper of the Conservative Right at that. It has in the main preserved the fairness of its news reporting, though not always of its news judgments. But in its feature pages and its leader columns it has been most hospitable, not to crossbench, liberal or Butskellite ideas of the kind Rees-Mogg made his reputation by upholding, but to that blend of union-bashing, *Kulturpessimismus*, and a selective obsession with some sorts of freedom, and not with others, that characterises the new Right.

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What of the Man of Judgment? The true test of judgment is the test of time. '*Omnium consensu*,' wrote Tacitus of the wretched emperor Galba, *capax imperii, nisi imperasset.*' Which some Victorian wit translated as 'the man with a brilliant future behind him.' Rees-Mogg has been wrong enough, often enough, and in a sufficiently confident, not to say conceited, tone, that one must now say that he has behind him a brilliant career as a prophet and judge of men.

Take his judgments on men in politics. His first great admiration was for Anthony Eden, of whom he wrote: 'one can go through his career and scarcely find an issue on which he has been proved wrong.' That was written within a few months of Suez. He was for Butler, rather than for Macmillan; for Maudling, in 1967, rather than for Heath. He found George Brown 'the most admirable' of Labour leaders, and he dismissed Jim Callaghan in phrases dripping with condescension: 'an able and pleasant family man, not much above the golden mean in ability. . . . If he were given the Treasury, it would probably be a promotion too high for him.' Only recently he was telling Italian audiences that Amintore Fanfani, the leader of the unreconstructed clerical Right, was the man to lead them out of the crisis. And he was for Nixon . . .

From the start of Watergate, Rees-Mogg was quite disastrously wrong in his judgment of what had happened, what it meant, and how it must end. His private reaction, which found its way into a famous leader, was one of those sententious maxims to which Men of Judgment are so prone: 'Never Trust a Scandal.' Wrong. There are times when the flare of scandal is required to illuminate some hidden, essential truth. It is the duty of journalism – it may be a dangerous duty – to identify such times, and Watergate was classically one of them. So far from having identified the moment correctly, Rees-Mogg expended much time and effort in trying to preserve, through the columns of *The Times*, the failing credit of the criminal regime. He failed, because in this case reality was not to be denied, and because some of his colleagues preserved a hard-headed awareness of the facts – but not before he had flown to Washington and astonished the American press with a speech in which he described them as 'hunting dogs'. Better that, on reflection, than joining the Dobermann Pinschers which were guarding the White House. He allowed his admiration for Nixon and Kissinger's foreign policy (and there, too, not least, his judgment may be faulted) to cloud his perception of what the Nixon Administration had done.

'I am a member,' Rees-Mogg wrote in his book about his personal beliefs, 'of that unilluminated group, the comfortably off, middle aged English professional class. It is natural that people should choose us as their worldly advisers, for we make some of the best lawyers or bankers that can be found.' If you can believe that, as the Duke of Wellington said to the man who addressed him as Mr Smith, you can believe anything. It would be truer to say, as Rees-Mogg would know if he had taken advantage of his quite exceptional opportunities to inform himself about the world, that the English professional classes in general, and English bankers and lawyers in particular, have – rightly or wrongly – become a bye-word around the world for complacency, conservatism and pomposity. But then a man who either has read the great Victorian novels and still thinks that the essence of the condition of women in Victorian England can be summed up in the words chastity and loyalty, or, not having read them, dares to excoriate our society by comparison with that of a hundred years ago, is capable of holding almost any opinion.

We do live in a society where, if a man wears a three-piece suit and a watch-chain, he is more readily credited with sound judgment than if he dons less reassuring gear. Indeed, the clerical suits may have served as a kind of protective coloration for the young Rees-Mogg. He is indeed not altogether innocent in worldly terms. He changed his view of Nixon just in time. 'William has always been pretty good at catching trains,' says a colleague. His true gift as a journalist, those who have worked closely with him say, has not been shrewd and cautious judgment, so much as a certain flair for the flashing phrase – 'picnicking on Vesuvius' – or for an idea that may turn out to be a runner. 'Hugh Cudlipp in pinstripes,' says an old friend. 'His real strength is his ability to speak to his readership.'

And to speak for it. Rees-Mogg's personal journey over the last few years may have been eccentric. His instinct has been to take refuge: in over-simplified economic theory; in mysticism; in Somerset; in the past; in the courtier's knee-breeches. But he does echo a certain more general narrowing of sympathy, a lowering of sights, even a failure of nerve on the part of many members of our Establishment. He believes that ours is a degenerate society, because it has lost its religion. But the great Victorians he professes to admire faced their own loss of certainty with courage and without self-deception. If there is degeneracy in our society now, it surely lies more in a diminished capacity to distinguish the true from the counterfeit, and the appearance from the reality.

Anna Coote: Grunwick: the lessons of the bitter end

Ten months ago, Grunwick was a household name. Today the gate outside the north London factory is still picketed by a small group of Asian women but the dispute has lost its union-bashing value for the press. Last Sunday the strikers held a conference to discuss 'what happened and the lessons for the trade union movement'. It went almost entirely unnoticed. Even the leaders of their union, APEX, have been hoping the strike will die quietly.

Some 250 people braved torrential rain to attend the conference. It was, in effect, a post mortem and a wake rolled into one. The strikers know they are beaten, although they are not quite ready to capitulate. 'We will not end this strike' said Committee Secretary Mahmood Ahmad. 'We must wait for the outcome of this question of union recognition – we owe it to the movement to do that.'

Until this week, the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) was still trying to ballot the workers inside the factory, to find out whether they wanted a trade union. On Tuesday, however, George Ward stopped procrastinating – a tactic he began in September 1976 – and refused point-blank to provide names and addresses. There is nothing more ACAS can do until the law is changed to strengthen its powers.

Since Ward rejected Lord Scarman's recommendation that he should re-employ them, the strikers have pinned their hopes for a victory on cutting off essential services to the factory. It would have been impossible to cut off supplies since workers who delivered them are poorly organised. Post Office, Electricity and Water Board workers, on the other hand, are well organised in the Union of Post Office Workers, the EEPTU and the General and Municipal Workers' Union. If they could be persuaded to black Grunwick, the strike would be over within days. But they have refused. After trying every reasonable method of persuasion, the strikers gave up hope.

They know there is no point calling any more mass pickets. Their original purpose in doing so was to build up pressure to get essential services withdrawn and to bring out more workers from the factory. A year ago they had reason to be optimistic; now it would seem a futile gesture. They doubt, in any case, that they could draw the same busloads of supporters in today's demoralised climate. And who needs a small mass picket?

They have no more weapons left. Labour MP Bill Fletcher is trying to get a Private Member's Bill through Parliament which would make an ACAS ballot valid without votes from workers who couldn't be contacted. But even if it were passed before the strike ended (an unlikely event), enabling ACAS to make a new recommendation for union recognition, Ward would not be bound to comply. The star pupil of the National Association for Freedom has had so much fun thumbing his nose at ACAS, he'd be unlikely to start playing cricket at that stage.

To force him to negotiate, the union would have to go to the Central Arbitration Committee for an order to improve wages or conditions. If Ward refused to obey it, the individual union members would then

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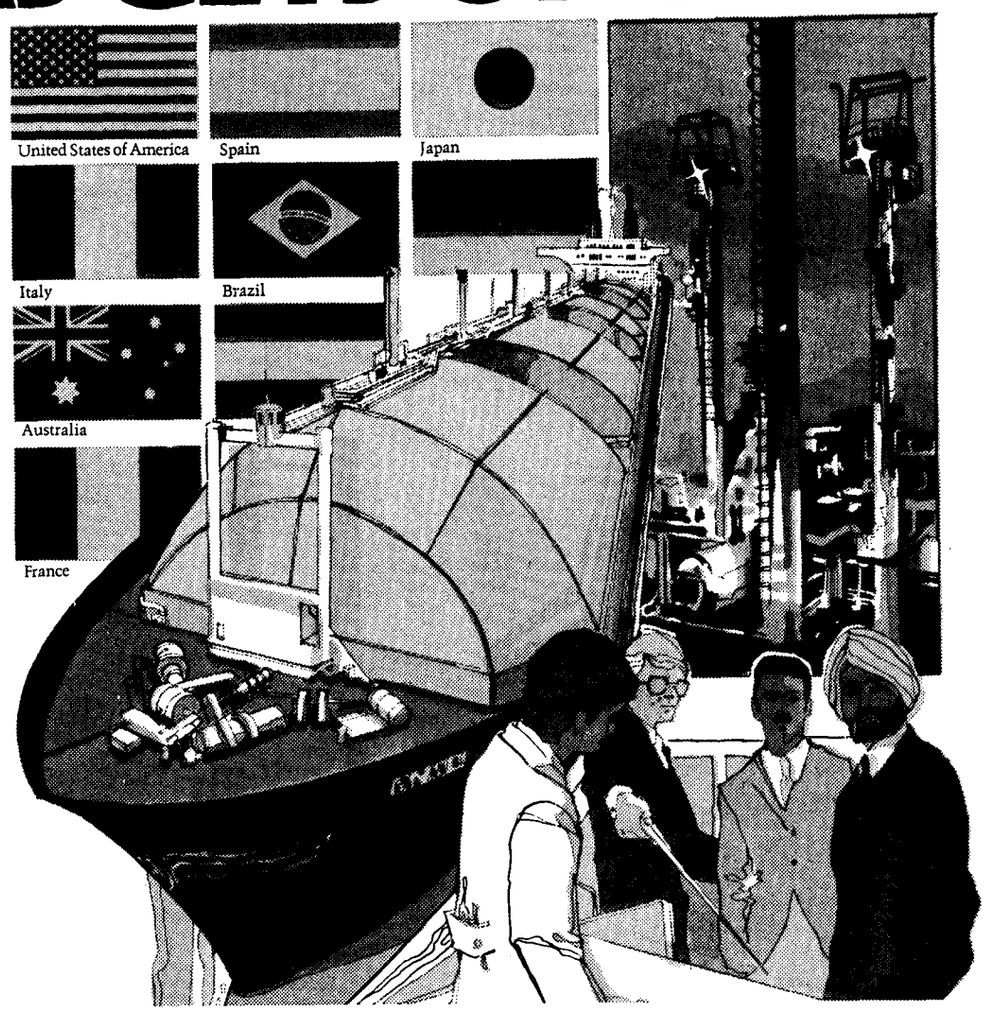

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have to sue him in the High Court for breach of contract. It would be a long, slow and expensive business.

So unless there is a miracle in the next week or two, the strikers will have no alternative but to respond to the call which is bound to come from APEX and end their 22-month dispute.

In June last year few people predicted it would come to this. For a dispute in a small factory, Grunwick drew an astonishing amount of support from the labour movement. When the Cricklewood postal workers were blacking Grunwick mail and when 20,000 supporters were marching through north-west London, the strikers might have been forgiven for thinking they were near to victory. Why did it evade them?

No-one could accuse the strike committee or Brent Trades Council (which backed the strike from the start) for failing to build up support for their cause. Last Sunday they gave their own view of what went wrong. Responsibility for their defeat, they said, lay not with George Ward; nor with NAFF; nor with the APEX leaders who took fright at the storm and hid in a legal thicket; nor even with the unions that failed to cut off essential services. It lay, they said, with the Labour Government which, fearing for its life, put pressure on the TUC to turn off the taps of official support. And it lay with the TUC for responding to that pressure.

Last summer the government was in an even shakier position than it is today. Gory newspaper pictures of injured policemen were not helping it one bit. (The press as usual paid far more attention to injured policemen than to injured or wrongfully arrested pickets – of which there were many.) With NAFF and the Tories out for blood, the government was acutely embarrassed by the display of trade union militancy which took place outside Grunwick. The Scarman Inquiry was launched and the word went out to union leaders that steam should be allowed to escape safely through this handy new valve.

Under pressure from the APEX executive, the strike committee agreed to cancel mass picketing for the duration of the Inquiry and the steam duly escaped. Under pressure from the UPW executive, the Cricklewood postal workers went back to work. On the same day – July 29th – the Appeal Court under Lord Denning declared that the first ACAS ballot (which excluded workers inside the factory because Ward would not co-operate) was void. From that point the tide turned and the strike was effectively lost.

The Strike Committee pressed APEX to table an emergency resolution at the TUC in September, to get essential services withdrawn. Instead, APEX tabled a more general motion calling for assistance: it was passed, leaving the TUC with no firm mandate. The remaining trump cards then lay in the unwilling hands of the UPW, GMWU and EEPTU. Despite entreaties from the strikers, despite a mass picket of 8,000 on November 7th, the 'Day of Reckonning' (243 pickets injured, 12 with broken bones, 113 arrests); and despite the sad hunger srike which prompted APEX to suspend the Strike Committee for four weeks, the three unions closed ranks behind the government and refused to budge. On December 14th the Law Lords upheld the Court of Appeal's decision on the ACAS ballot. On December 22nd the UPW fined seven of its officers a total of £1,400 for their unofficial action in Cricklewood – a final blow to any hope that union members might act against their leaders' instructions.

Those involved in the strike agree that there are three main lessons to be learned. The first, they maintain, is that sweeping statements about 'immigrant workers undermining the labour movement' can never be made again. The second is that it is dangerous in an industrial dispute to rely too heavily on legal procedures. The third – and most important – is that the trade unions' greatest weakness is their own right wing, not only in the leadership but among the members who vote right-wing leaders into power.

The 55 strikers who stuck it out to the end feel bitterly let down. Jayaben Desai, the tiny determined woman who led them, is convalescing from a serious illness (not helped by her hunger strike last November) and was absent from Sunday's conference. 'If the strike ends it will be a defeat for all immigrant workers,' she told me. 'What are they to think of the trade unions now? Their courage will collapse.'

Perhaps her pessimism is misplaced. Since Grunwick hit the headlines, dozens of groups of immigrant workers have begun to organise. Some have already succeeded; others are still fighting. One hundred employees of the Garner Steak House chain have been on strike for union recognition since January 26th. They come from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Egypt and Turkey, and before they walked out they were being paid a basic rate of £28.49 for a 55-hour week.

Their employer Cyril Margolis has declared himself the 'George Ward of the catering industry'. The strikers, who belong to the Transport and General Workers' Union, have declared this Saturday, May 20th, a Day of Solidarity and there will be a march from Speakers Corner to Trafalgar Square, starting at 2 p.m. Their position looks bleak: picketing 16 restaurants from 11 a.m. to midnight is an almost impossible task. Many are deterred from joining the strike because their work permits are in the hands of the boss. The outlook is somewhat brighter for immigrant workers engaged in a similar dispute at the Windsor Safari Park.

In both cases, the Grunwick story is a source of inspiration, not disillusionment. The problem is that trade unions are geared to operating in large plants and industrial complexes. The great majority of unorganised workers in Britain are in small factories, shops, restaurants and hotels, and it is here – where wages are low and conditions poor – that immigrant labour is concentrated. If the trade unions are going to respond effectively to the needs of these workers, they will have to rethink current strategies and find new ways of getting their message across to the immigrant communities.

Patrick Wintour

Race, death and fear in London's East End

'I wish all you people would order us out rather than go on killing us'. 'Either tell us to go like Amin told the Asians in Uganda, or if not the Government must do something to protect us'.

The first piece of advice comes from a terrified 45-year-old Bengali woman in Spitalfields, the second from Shaffique Uddin who manages a Wimpy Bar on the Whitechapel Road, not 400 yards from where Altab Ali was stabbed to death on 4th May. Who killed Altab Ali? The 7,000 demonstrators who marched to Downing Street from Spitalfields last Sunday had no doubt. 'Racists, Racists' they shouted in the torrential rain, replying to their own question.

Some of the younger Bengalis, supporters of the Bengali Youth Movement that has been active in Whitechapel for the last two years, were even more emphatic. Their primary slogan, 'Self-defence is no offence', was occasionally submerged under chants of 'Revenge! Revenge!'

Chunu Meah, one of the two highly articulate 19-year-old convenors of the Youth Movement pointed out that the slogan should not be taken too literally; if they wanted revenge they would not be sending letters to Mr Callaghan. Nevertheless, these chants do have significance. Though there is no actual split between the Youth Movement and the older leaders ensconced in the Bangladesh Welfare Association, there is a perceptible and growing difference in attitude. Family ties make the differences less defined than they were amongst the Indians in Southall in 1976, but they exist. The secretary of the Spitalfield mosque may 'beg' the police for protection, and the chairman of Sunday's rally may refer to white speakers as 'members of the host country', but the younger Bengalis are not so deferential. 'Jalal', the other convenor of the Youth Movement, said: 'We don't want to talk about the past. We will ourselves do everything in every respect to achieve the equality that is our right'. Specifically they are campaigning to keep the local school open and to introduce Bengali classes, working against 'racist changes in the child benefit laws' and encouraging older Bengalis to use the Law Centre.

The older mens' thoughts are still conditioned by the village politics of Bangladesh and particularly of Silhet where most immigrant Bengalis come from. For the demonstration a chaotic unity prevailed between the two generations, but it was undeniably the Youth Movement, and not the elders or the Anti-Nazi League that ener-

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gised the Action Committee against Racial Attacks which in turn arranged the demonstration. Among the youngsters the talk now is that either the police must do something to defend the community, or failing that they will themselves set up their own patrols as they did last summer. More Bengalis are convinced they must fight back against their attackers 'like the Jamaicans and even the Indians'. Fewer see any worth in keeping their heads down, respectability and deputations to the High Commissioner.

Clearly, it is part of the local police's job now to try and cool the tension down. They are saying that Ali's murder and other attacks must be seen in the context of a traditionally violent East End. In this particular case anyway they are looking for a West Indian as well as two white youths. 'Anyone who says Ali's murder was racist is guessing', says Chief Inspector Wallis, the Community Liaison Officer for the borough of Tower Hamlets. Nevertheless, he admits that the police are having problems. 'Our police force is designed to work with a large amount of popular support. In their own country the Bengalis do not go to policemen. There is 50 per cent illiteracy amongst Bengalis here in their own language. Many cannot speak English. As a result, their community is isolated, inward looking and very easily frightened. When we do apprehend someone for a crime against an Asian it is very difficult to get the victims into court as witnesses. To overcome these difficulties for the last nine months we have had regular monthly liaison meetings with their community leaders. We are also trying to publicise the local beat officers in Bengali areas, so they know the policemen they can complain to. I myself will be going to the sub-continent for six weeks to bring back answers to help us here. Other officers go to the Whitechapel Arts Centre to do Asian studies.'

It all sounds very sensible, but it does not alter the fact that every single Bengali I spoke to thought the police were not doing enough to protect them, that there was little point taking complaints to the police, that they often arrived much too late to do anything and that few charges were ever brought. As long ago as the murder of a Southall Sikh in 1976, 3,000 Bengali workers marched to the Leman Street police station to demand proper police protection in the East End. Two years later, few Bengalis are without more personal stories of attacks and harassment.

Just how widespread is the habit of not reporting attacks to the police was shown during a recent investigation into the deaths of two vagrants. A group of youngsters admitted to the police to a series of offences against Tower Hamlets' Bengalis, mounting into three figures. Although the police had evidence of a number of these crimes, many had never been reported. It does not take much to poison the atmosphere of a tense community; that example shows just what one gang can do.

Here are three different samples of violence against Asians: Four attacks on Asians occurred in a block of flats, Grove Mansions near Commercial Road this March. Four white boys attacked an Asian family who had come to visit friends on 12 March. They pointed a knife at the man's abdomen and demanded money. The family called for help and the boys ran away only to return three quarters of an hour later to pelt with bricks and stones some Asians playing in the forecourt. One day later an Asian woman was coming down the steps of one of the flats, and moved aside to let a white boy go by who then went up one step, turned and tried to strangle her neck. The police were called at 6.45 p.m. and arrived at 9.15 p.m. On 31 March a man sent his son out to the shops: five white boys attacked him. The police took over three hours to arrive.

The Trades Council have also compiled a list of attacks on Shadwell Gardens estate which has an increasing Asian population. 'Parents report that they don't allow their children to play on the estate as their toys get taken from them and they are abused and attacked by other children on the estate'. Thirty Asian families complained of windows continually smashed by bricks. Mr Khan 55, complained of being beaten unconscious by eight to ten white boys, needing seven stitches in his head at the London Hospital. A Mr Wadud complained of having his windows smashed three times, of having his car overturned and damaged by kids and of having his house burgled. 'He no longer sees any point in taking the complaints to the police.' This was just one estate. The full local report of the Trades Council, based on a wide sample of attacks, has yet to be completed, but they are already concerned about a notorious incident in the community back in 1976 when a Mr Siddiqui was knifed and taken to hospital. Most of the members of the Anti-Racist Committee of Asians in East London saw the attack, the assailant was caught but released within hours due to what the police describe as conflicting evidence. The police point out that, however notorious the case, no formal complaint was lodged. Meanwhile, the belief in police complacency grows rather than recedes.

The latest subterranean allegation is that the police are doing little to find the murderers of Ali; in fact the pressure on the police to find the culprits is enormous. Ali may or may not have been killed by a member of a racist party, but as Dave Alburry, local organiser of the Anti-Nazi League says, racist violence increases at times of political tension. The successful Anti-Nazist carnival and the charged atmosphere of the elections in which 41 NF candidates stood (without the success they hoped for) defined the atmosphere of the borough the night of Ali's murder. The NF's large presence in the East End institutionalises racism and makes Asians fair game.

Perhaps the saddest story came from an English teacher who told me that attendance of Bengali women at their English day classes had halved since the murder a fortnight ago. The teachers have visited them to try and assure them of their safety but many, for the moment, remain too scared to venture out from their locked doors.

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Facing up to the new 'Hitlerwave' in Germany

West Germany is being deluged with books, films and magazine articles which claim to give 'objective' and 'unemotional' accounts of the Nazi past. Here GITTA SERENY investigates the impact on young and inexperienced Germans.

Twenty books on the Hitler era have been published in the past three years, twelve of them by Germans, and I know of eight more now in preparation. Five major works, four of them – a fact of some significance – originating in English, have appeared just during the past twelve months. Every major magazine in Germany has been running long serialisations on Hitler, or other Third Reich figures; every newspaper in the country devotes vast space to reviews and discussions of Hitlerian topics; every television channel screens at least two peak-time programmes a month with a Hitler or World War II theme, and Hitler films are big business. Hans Jurgen Syberberg's extraordinary *Confessions of Winifred Wagner*, in which, under his gently relentless questioning Winni, Richard Wagner's 80-year-old daughter, one of Hitler's intimates, confirms her continued devotion to 'Wolf', has been seen by most intelligent Germans, and is already considered a classic of its kind. And historian Hans Joachim Fest's 2½ hour documentary 'Hitler, A Career', produced entirely with filmclips from Nazi archives, has been playing to full houses all over Germany and has been seen by over a million people, 70 per cent of them under 35, since last summer.

The media – not just in Germany – pounces on everything to do with the Nazi era, and the show-biz of it extends to a rock musical, *The Führer* (in English!) Hitler records; Hitler-souvenirs, God help us; Bormann's teeth; an alleged Hitler son.

What is it all about? Thirst for knowledge, neo-Nazism rampant, re-birth of anti-Semitism? Is Hitler 'the Hero of the Seventies', as the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* has asked? Or is this nothing but the result of publishers, film-makers and television executives anxious to make a mint? The answers are important to the equanimity of Europe, but they appear to depend on complex factors, none of which can be treated in isolation. My attempt to come to terms with them has centred on a series of interviews with young Germans, and with intellectuals who are able to recall the events of Nazism.

In America and Britain, although among some of the older generations the distrust of the Germans seems incurable, the Hitlerwave, motivated either commercially, purely intellectually, or frankly ideologically, comes from without. In Germany, where with few exceptions, it stems primarily from the immense need of most thinking people to understand and come to terms with the past it comes from within.

There is a deep conflict between moralists and pragmatists: the moralists feel that the *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* – understanding and acknowledgement of the collective guilt for the Hitler past – is imperative to Germany's health as a nation. Without it, they say, what exists now and lies ahead is moral and spiritual stagnation. The pragmatists, most of whom agree that ideally the Hitler generation of Germans should have accepted – and admitted to their children – their share of guilt, feel that after thirty-two years it is pointless to continue that battle. The only rational solution is to relegate Hitler and his Third Reich to the past, and to what they regard as strictly historical, rather than psycho-analytical, research.

Neo-Nazism as a political force is negligible in Germany: it consists of a minute lunatic fringe (0.4 per cent in the last federal – none in any recent municipal – elections), a few silly kids playing cops and robbers under two Nazi fanatics called Hoffmann and Róder, and a couple of right-radical papers with a readership of about two-hundred thousand 60-80-year olds. There is probably less effective neo-Nazism in Germany than, for example, in Britain with her severe labour and immigrant problems.

'There is also virtually no overt anti-Semitism' says Michel Friedman, a 23-year-old Jewish law student in Frankfurt 'The principal reason being that there are virtually no Jews: 35,000 in all of Western Germany (the equivalent of ten blocks, perhaps in New York City), a few young children, 2,000 students between 15 and 30, and the rest old.' This, as we shall see, is only true up to a point: the Jews' ineradicable link with Hitler is unfinished business for the Germans and remains the country's most fundamental problem. The terrorists and all of the Hitler-revisionist elements, in and outside Germany, are involved with the Hitler past: above all, they *use* it. And virtually all of them direct their efforts at the youth of Germany, and the young in other countries.

The terrorists – the plans of whose leaders require a Europe, and particularly a Germany, in chaos – are young, stuffed with unexperienced ideologies and desperate ideals (many of them have come out of the Christian youth movements), deeply disillusioned with their parent-generation, and deeply resentful of the role of the "ugly German".

'They do see the present-day German establishment as the heirs to Hitler' says the psychoanalyst Dr Margarete Mitscherlich who, at the Sigmund Freud Institute in Frankfurt, works with many young people. 'To put it in extreme terms, to them Schleyer was a symbol of Himmler, and our police are the equivalent of the SS. When they fight against them, they basically feel they are doing what their parents should have done.' This is not just a psychiatrist's opinion. A Lutheran pastor used a very similar explanation for the act of some young officers in Munich who recently, while drunk, burned a Jew in effigy. 'It is appalling', he said. 'But rather than expressing anti-Semitism of their own, it could represent a protest against their parents who they feel to be cowards for not owning up to what they did or felt thirty years ago. The relationships of many of our young with their parents (and *our* young, he said, contrary to those in other countries, are *all* the postwar generations, up to 45) are so complicated by the undigested Hitler past, that what these young officers did could also be interpreted as a gesture of solidarity with their parents, who, now that they are getting old, they no longer wish to deny.'

The title of South African writer Jillian Becker's recent book about the terrorists, *Hitler's Children*, has caused an outcry in some of the German press. 'But' said the film director Hans Jurgen Syberberg – who has made *four* films about Hitlerian themes – 'how can people deny the connection? I don't sympathise with the terrorists' aims or means in any way, but I do feel sympathy with their cause, which, whatever way you put it, is Germany's past'.

Even this extent of sympathy for the terrorists is rare. The vast majority of people, including the young, are unqualifiedly opposed to them, whatever the terrorists' reasons, and want them stopped – by any means. To my astonishment, in a highschool class of thirty-six 16-year olds in a strictly working class district of Hamburg, more than half spoke up for the re-introduction of the death penalty, and this, I was told everywhere, was representative of the population.

'Here are the dangers' says Dr Mitscherlich: 'Many older people, as you see, are calling for a return to law and order, which

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they associate, not unnaturally, with their happy youth under Hitler. There is nothing much to be done about this: it is a problem that will only be solved biologically, with time. But the thinking young German who joins the call for authoritarian violence, is abandoning a battle he has waged quite deliberately, quite consciously since Hitler, against the innate authority-hunger which he knows is part of his nature. And that battle, he abandons to his and our peril.'

Margarete Mitscherlich's husband, Alexander Mitscherlich is Professor in Social Psychology at Frankfurt University, Director of the Freud Institute, and, as head of the German medical commission at the Nuremberg 'Doctors' trials' spent seven months observing and talking to all the accused. 'One of our great dangers at present' he says, 'are the filmmakers and writers – a virtual flood of them – who claim to present Hitler from a "historical perspective" – by no means only in Germany, but just as much, if not even more, abroad! "Historical perspective" sounds good, 'but given that Hitler's principal characteristic was his fundamental immorality, it is of course impossible, and even immoral, to view him objectively!'

'After three decades' said his wife 'it is right to look for new explanations; but they must be sought in the social and intellectual phenomena that led up to Hitler: to the fact that he is the only dictator in history who was *voted* into power' . . . J. P. Stern, Professor at Large at Cornell, and head of the German Department at University College, London, says in his book *Hitler, The Führer and The People** (which will doubtlessly cause new furore when it appears in Germany this year) that Hitler was not the creator, but the creature of his time. He merely echoed the self-destructive, egocentred tradition of German thinkers and writers (however great) of the late 19th and 20th Century: Franz Wertel, Thomas Mann, Freud, Jung, Jasper, Kafka. The devotion of so many Germans for Hitler, says Professor Stern, thus had its origin in German society's traditional conformity, concentration on self and passivity toward individual liberty.

The explanation can *not* be sought,' said Dr Mitscherlich, 'in a pseudo-objective consideration of Hitler's person and deeds: that approach is dangerously persuasive for our young – as we can see from Joachim Fest's film.

Hitler, A Career, the documentary with Joachim Fest's text and Josef Goebbels' films, with its deliberate attempt to portray Hitler as Germans saw him from 1918 to 1945, has unleashed a storm of controversy. In a poll conducted recently by *Der Spiegel*, 60 per cent of all young Germans between 16 and 24 said they expected to see, or had already seen it. I took three groups to the film and talked with each for hours afterwards. Hundreds of thousands of words – analysis and criticism – have been written about it in the German papers, but none of them, I thought, were as significant as the reactions of the young – slowly changing and evolving – when they were given a chance to think together.

Florian, aged 16, said he really thought it was pretty good, pretty much what he had expected. 'If I saw a film announced, say, of Frank Sinatra's "Career", I wouldn't expect a moral essay' he said 'I'd just expect to see a portrait of his life'. 'There was an awful lot I hadn't known' said 18-year old Herbert. 'All that pomp, those fantastic rallies – it was really theatre, wasn't it? Art. Beautiful'. 'For the first time' said Norbert, aged 17, 'I could understand my grandparents'. 'Yes,' said Karl-Heinz, 'it was exactly the way my parents' 50 and 60-year old friends talked about it'.

'It really got to me' Dorothea said – she was 16. 'That model they showed of Speer's post-war Berlin. So impressive.' 'Yes' said Gaby 'and when they said it was planned that every year deputations of slaves from the East were to march through the streets, I could just see it happen – fantastic . . .'

'But when they showed the beginning of the war' said Traude, aged 18 – by now they had been talking for two hours, with very little help aside from an occasional nudge from me – 'and the commentator said that the Germans were just helping the German minorities in Danzig. That wasn't true, was it? Wasn't there something about German convicts dressed up as Poles being used to fake an attack, and then all being killed by "defending" Germans? Is that not how they started the war?' (It was).

> 'I found myself feeling sorry for Hitler . . . the last lonely birthday'

It was remarkable to watch how, once they began to question what they had seen and felt, both their knowledge, and moral sense emerged: 'He says Hitler was incorruptible' said Norbert (the 'he' always refers to Fest, the writer) 'that Hitler only accepted money from industrialists if given without strings. But surely that wasn't so? In those circumstances, conditions wouldn't have had to be spelled out: they would have been implicit. And of course there had to be strings. But if the speaker actually *says* Hitler was incorruptible – that's sort of impressive, isn't it?'

'Nor did he mention *Mein Kampf*' said Traude. 'And the concentration camps just once, for five seconds . . .' 'Yes' said Florian 'and what *about* the Jews? They came in three times: first when he talks about Hitler at 18, in Vienna, when they show film of bearded dirty looking men with funny braids, and a couple of pretty girls and say how shocked Hitler was by the racial defilement of Austrian girls . . .' 'Yes' said Gaby 'and I thought, my God, they *do* look pretty awful. Just think: that's what it made *me* feel . . .' 'The second time the Jews were mentioned was when he said Jews began to leave, and showed photos of Einstein, Thomas Mann – *was* he a Jew? – Reinhardt and some actors. And then, do you remember, he had the gall to say 'They left, and left the country to provincialism: my God, as if they left by choice!'

'And then' said Herbert 'there was that bit where they showed people being shot in a pit – the only time, incidentally, they showed people being killed except by Allied bombs – and they said it was in Russia and they were partisans and Jews, thereby linking the Jews with partisans: as if they'd killed Jews because they were partisans. And then he said, do you remember? '90,000 Russians were killed here,' and not more than two minutes later '91,000 Germans were taken prisoner by the Soviets; only 5,000 returned.' Herbert was angry now. 'Outrageous', he said, 'that this should not be a Nazi, but Fest's, commentary'.

'I found myself feeling sorry for Hitler', said Rudolf, a young teacher and our host. 'The way he suddenly became an old man toward the end; the trembling hand; the last lonely birthday celebrated with nothing except a parade of a couple of dozen of Hitler Youths on an abandoned stretch of the autobahn. And then the way they kept emphasising that his main purpose was to save the world from Marxism. With our whole country now an armed camp against Marxists, how can the film avoid making people feel "Well, if he had succeeded, we wouldn't be having all these troubles now"?' 'And what about the ending?' asked Monika, also a teacher, and Rudolf's wife, 'Fifty nations fought against Germany. Germany stood alone. I couldn't believe my ears. I know he didn't mean it the way it sounded, but thats not the point. We were right back in 1918'. 'There is no indication whatever' said Thomas – aged 15 – 'of an indictment'.

'That's what my father said' said university student, Manfred 'He said, all the time he was watching he kept thinking "The essence is missing", and when I asked him "What is the essence?", he said "A judgment."'

'I consider it a deeply dangerous film', said Siegfried Lenz, one of Germany's great post-war writers, all of whose books (*The German Lesson*, *The Example* etc) have as their basic theme the Hitler past. 'It is impermissible to amputate morality out of a treatment of the Nazi history, whether the medium be a film, a book or articles'.

Joachim Fest's Hitler biography, all 1,200 pages of it, is highly readable and covers thoroughly all of Hitler's terror, leaving no doubt whatever where the author stands. It has sold 500,000 copies in Germany. He is co-publisher of one of Germany's best papers, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, and writes many of their political commentaries. He is young, energetic intelligent, nervy and, despite his rise to fame, engagingly modest. He gave me an excellent three-hour lunch in Frankfurt, and passionately defending his film throughout, made me feel that I wished I could agree with him.

'I think the most tragic mistake that was made in 1945' he said 'was to identify Hitler exclusively with the extermination of the Jews – basically effacing the knowledge about all the other millions he killed, and his plans for the future. The result

University of California Press 1976

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has not only been a catastrophic distortion of the Hitler period, but also that the majority of Germans, and others too, are sick of the subject. To me, Hitler's immorality, the political monstrosity of his regime are incontestable: it doesn't *need* reiterating. What I felt was needed – and for which the medium of film is superbly suitable – was a redressing of the balance by conveying unemotional, rational and factual new understanding of how it came about'.

This is precisely what another distinguished journalist, Karl Heinz Janssen contests. 'Young people' he said 'should *not* be exposed to this film unprepared – the appallingly dangerous thing is that of course they are.' Professor Eberhard Jäckel, a historian at Stuttgart, says: 'We may have made mistakes; but what we did achieve (since 1945) is that there is virtually no one in Germany who does not (in his bones) associate Hitler with immorality'. 'The awful thing is' said Jansen 'that Fest's film, with its phenomenal appeal, could undo this achievement. Because the film not only makes Hitler appear attractive, but above all, an object of sympathy.

Fest, who acted from the best of motives, can in no way be compared with those who produce the other categories of what the Mitscherlichs called 'pseudo-objective (or totally *subjective*) presentations of Hitler's person and deeds'. And this applies, above all, to the blyatantly neo-Nazi publications which can be found all over Germany (as well as Britain and America), such as the invidious pamphlet *Did Six Million Really Die?* by a British journalist writing under the pseudonym Richard Harwood, and *The Hoax of the 20th Century*, an expansion of the odious theme, by A. R. Butz, an electrical engineer from Illinois. These writers propose that a) the Jews weren't exterminated at all – the 6,000,000 claim, they say, is nothing but a politically inspired conspiracy by world Zionism and b) if some Jews did die – a few hundredthousand at best – then they died as others did, because of the war. (Of all countries in the world, only in South Africa is an attempt being made to outlaw these publications!)

But Dr Mitscherlich's words apply in equal measure to less obviously emotive books, by no means concentrating on this one subject: for example, to name but two, the 'totally revised and expanded' 1976 German edition of *Hitler's Tabletalk** by Henry Picker, the only book available in the German language supposedly based on Hitler's own words (*Mein Kampf* being illegal in Germany), and *Hitler's War*† by the British writer David Irving.

In the German version of *Table talk* (the much longer foreign language editions are based on a different, more complete and objectively presented manuscript), Dr Picker, a lawyer (now self-taught historian) and Bormann's temporary adjutant at Hitler's HQ when he was 30 produced notes of Hitler's conversations for four of the fifteen months they were recorded. After the war, having managed to preserve his own notes and a few taken by the other chroniclers, he made literally

hundreds of changes and 'improvements' and eventually for his 1976 edition, added 150 pages of his own commentaries to Hitler's words. Albert Speer, formerly Hitler's architect and Minister of Armaments, told me in his home in Heidelberg that Picker has so totally changed Hitler's language in places that, except for those who knew him well and can, of course, recognise many quotes, he ends up sounding like just anybody, rather than Hitler'. In Spandau prison, where he first read the book in 1960, Speer noted that

> These Tabletalks don't provide a true picture of Hitler. Picker not only filtered and stylised the wording . . . but above all (Hitler) was normally . . . far more primitive than Picker allows him to appear, far coarse and rougher, but also . . . (partly because of Hitler's informal Austrian phraseology, all of which Picker removed) . . . far more persuasive.

'For those of us who *have* to read *Tabletalk*' said an 18-year old history student in Munich, 'it is very misleading. You see, most of us have too little pre-knowledge to question those who are presented to us as authorities in their field. I happen to have grown up with a historian-father. This book is a hapless pretence (*eine plumpe Vorspiegelung*) at objectivity. How *dare* these men who were Hitler's sycophants, profiting from his favour, now pretend to be capable of objectivity, while the young of our country, who, with the fewest exceptions such, as luck will have it, myself, have no one to turn to for true objectivity, as their captive audience?

David Irving's claim, in his latest sensationalist opus *Hitler's War*, that Hitler neither ordered nor was aware of the extermination of the Jews (yet again, we can see, *using* his most sensitive subject, to mislead), was allowed to stand in the US and British editions, but was removed from the German edition by the publishers Ullstein. 'No house for which I am responsible' wrote Ullstein's managing director, Wolf Jobst Siedler, on May 7, 1974 to Irving

> will publish material that I cannot justify politically or historically . . . I do not think my cuts have . . . harmed your book but . . . should you . . . be of a different opinion, then we must part . . .

Irving, who had been paid an advance of 90,000DM, elected not to take up the suggestion.

While his thesis about Hitler's ignorance, produced with the help of misinterpreted German documents, therefore didn't appear in the German edition‡ the German press, not surprisingly, reported fully the storm of protest that arose when the book was published in England last summer. Almost all adults I talked to in Germany seemed to know all about it. 'Unfortunately, says Albert Speer, it has already provided longed-for ammunition for those here in Germany who are busy building up the new 'war-blame lie'.

But in the final analysis, Irving's basically absurd thesis is not the only harmful thing about this book. 'The real problem' said Manfred, a 30-year old economist in Mainz 'is that he wrote his book, so to speak, from Hitler's point of view. But how can our young people deal with such a perspective without being misled, when all they know are the bare bones of the history of the Third Reich?'

None of these manipulated versions of history matter for the old: all of them are profoundly dangerous for the young – now two thirds of Germany's population. The ignorance of young Germans about their recent history is a continuous talking point in Germany.

My first meeting with young Germans, on the morning I arrived, was unplanned. My hosts, Monika and Rudolf Petzenhauser, are both teachers, and Rudolf, a 39-year old historian, was, it so happened – as he does every year – taking his graduating class to see Dachau, Hitler's first concentration camp, near Munich. His colleague and friend, Father Böckle, Catholic priest, teacher of religion, and, incidentally, a native of Dachau-village, who was ten when the camp existed, also took a class: thirty-four 14-year-old boys.

Organised visits to the camp began immediately after its liberation in 1945. During those first years of revulsion and remorse, Dachau, conveniently located near a major city, and believed by the vast majority of people to have been, like all the camps (they thought), an extermination camp for Jews, became a kind of symbol, a place of pilgrimage. In fact, comparatively few Jews were held at Dachau, or at many other of the concentration camps within Germany's borders. It was primarily a bitterly harsh punitive camp for political prisoners, and while many died of overwork and starvation, and the bodies (just like in the *extermination* camps, all located in occupied Poland) were burned in the camp crematorium, no one was 'exterminated' there.

Rudolf, partly for my benefit, had decided not to 'guide' his group, but to wait for questions. Walking around the huge compound, through the curiously sterile seeming crematorium, the oven doors somehow obscenely open, and the tiny gaschamber, never used, where hundreds of visitors, God knows why, had scribbled their names on the walls, the questions were slow in coming. The students seemed vaguely troubled,

*Seeweld, 1976
†Viking, New York, 1977

‡*Hitler und seine Feldherren*, Ullstein 1975

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but incapable of putting their discomfort into words, without help.

'Well, it's . . . it's a *museum* really, isn't it?' said 18-year old Gaby who, particularly interested in contemporary history, was on her second visit 'It isn't *real*. You'll see' she added in an aside, to me, 'At our age, unless they *are* guided, its just history to them; its like the inquisition, you know: quite interesting.' And up to a point this was true. As an UNRRA Child Welfare Officer, I had seen Dachau immediately after liberation, and there was no relationship between this hygienised reconstruction, and the reeking reality of that time. What there is now – and how can it be otherwise? – is not real. In the one reconstructed barrack, the bunks, tables and chairs smell agreeably of pine. 'I don't see that it's so different from our youth hostels' one 17-year-old finally said, somewhat defensively. 'Look, here on the notice it says they had to keep their blue-checked sheets symmetrically tidy. Well, so what? So do we on our skiing holidays. And our sheets are blue-checked too.' It was a telling demonstration of the need to identify, their perplexity, not least over their own detachment, and the virtual impossibility of imparting real understanding of the complex facts except by careful preparation and guidance. History is not learnt easily.

The next day, during a discussion in the Petzenhauser's living room, following a visit to Fest's film, this same group indicated that part of the difficulty at Dachau had been, not only that they knew that we – Rudolf and I – had expected them to be appalled (and they are very authority-conscious), but that they themselves had expected to be horrified. 'I was shocked at myself for not being shocked' said that same 17-year old boy 'I felt there had to be something wrong with me that I didn't feel sick to my stomach.

This is already a key: perhaps it is true that young Germans – as is so widely claimed – know even fewer facts about Hitler and his Third Reich than other young. But they are inescapably 'involved'. 'Unless children are systematically conditioned by an amoral environment such as happened during the Third Reich' said Albert Speer 'their instinct tells them what is right and wrong. Given full access to all facts in an atmosphere of freedom, I believe they have unfailing moral judgment.'

This is precisely what I found: the young Germans are a profoundly moral generation, and the indifference the younger amongst them so often – so defensively – proclaim ('We don't care about Hitler; we weren't even born then; what has it to do with us?') is less than skin-deep, even for the youngest.

In the Dachau museum, Father Böckle – as we see *has* to be done – *was* guiding his younger boys around the beautifully mounted life-size photographic exhibits. Wide-eyed, they listened as he told them that on occasions, when the prisoners would be taken through the town on their way to work, he had actually *seen* them when he was ten, and yes, they did look just like what they were seeing in these photographs.

They stared 'Like this, you mean?' a boy pointed unbelievingly at a scarecrow figure in a convict uniform. They became extraordinarily excited: they pulled the priest from exhibit to exhibit and the questions virtually tumbled over each other. 'What sort of work did they have to do? How long were they imprisoned? How could you tell Jews apart from other people? What really was a communist? A Quaker? A freemason?'

'What was the Crystalnight?' asked a small thin boy standing in front of a picture showing men in uniform with swastika armbands breaking up shopwindows. 'Why, *why*, would they smash up shops owned by Jews? That's terribly unfair: it costs money to repair windows.'

They stood for a long time looking at a huge photograph of burning books while one boy read aloud the long caption. Einstein, Heine, Thomas Mann left them cold. But when they heard the name of Erich Kästner, they jumped. 'Why would they burn books of someone who wrote *Emil and the Detectives*?' ('Felix Salten?' asked a 13-year old girl in Hamburg ten days later when the bookburnings came up. 'What was wrong with *Bambi*?).

Ten years later, a class of 16-year olds in Hamburg who, like most other people, had never associated 'Hitler with anything' except the lost war and the murder of the Jews, were aghast to hear of his Euthanasia Programme, in the course of which around 80,000 physically and mentally handicapped German and Austrian hospital patients, about a third, I told them, children, were gassed. Some of them, as a matter of fact, I said, were killed in one of the special 'Children's Sections' in a hospital in their own city, Hamburg.

'You mean *Germans*?' a boy said in a tone of utter disbelief *Children? German children*?' said another. 'Here? In Hamburg?' They came back to it, time and again. Jews were unreal to them: in that class of 36 children (and in nine of the 11 young groups with whom I met) no one had ever met a Jew. And figures like the murder of six million Jews, or eleven million Russian civilians – or for that matter 50 million dead altogether by 1945 – are as impossible to absorb or visualise as is, in fact, the word 'extermination'. But the thought that sick *children* had been deliberately killed, in a *hospital*, in their own city, Hamburg . . . that struck a chord. One young teacher, Christa, said later 'This was worth weeks of lessons; they'll never forget it.' But another teacher, elsewhere, disapproved of children being given such information . . . which may be as good an explanation as any why no German children are given it. 'You shouldn't have told them things like that' she said, 'They won't sleep tonight.'

Her reaction was significant. But I found it even more important, that a shy and obviously inarticulate boy, who, throughout the two hours I had spent with that Hamburg class, had not said a word, *did* say something in the end, long after we had left the subject of 'mercykilling'.

'I've been thinking about what you said, that they killed all those people' he said 'Jews and Russians and Poles, and people who were handicapped and mentally ill. I've been thinking' he repeated, the class deathly still. 'It is wrong', he said in his ponderous way. 'Every human being is of value.'

At Dachau that day, walking his group past the 'whipping post' in the square, the priest told the boys about the punishments the SS meted out every day. 'They didn't say anything for quite a while' he told me 'and then one of them said 'If one sees that . . . that thing, one has to feel ashamed of being German.' And another said 'But were they human beings at all if they did such things?' And then finally a third, after a long pause 'But not *all* SS were bad like those who were here' and then he added after a moment 'My grandpa was in the SS'. I think that shook Father Böckle; he couldn't think of an answer for this boy. Who can?

When I saw *Hitler, A Career* I remembered something from my own childhood I had pushed away. It was 1936. I was 13, travelling to Vienna from my boarding school in England. The train stopped in Nuremberg – it was the day of the rally and we were told we would be held up for several hours. "Why don't you go and see it?" said the guard to me and another little girl 'Its exciting'. We went. We stood way back on the very edge of what looked like a million people, all standing in perfect symmetry and brilliant light and darkness. It was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen. And when this man suddenly appeared, seemingly out of nowhere, and, all along, the sound of his steps echoing in the huge arena, walked the long long distance to the platform, I felt and shared the vibrant silence of that mass of people, and then, when he arrived and the shout began 'Sieg Heil, Sieg Heil' . . . I suddenly felt myself shouting with them – and so did my English friend, who spoke no German.

I knew, at 13, what Hitler was. I had listened to clever people; and I knew that dreadful things were going to happen in our lives. I never told anyone about my hour at the Nuremberg rally: it was then, and, remains a thing of shame. But sitting in the Fest film, I knew what these young people were feeling; and I knew and know the danger.

If today's elders have produced the 'economic miracle' –the envy of all Europe – their back-breaking work was not because, but instead of repentance: the power of the gun was replaced by the power of the D-mark, and they could, after all, offer their children the promised glorious future.

Perhaps it is time, in Germany and elsewhere, to exercise much sharper self-censorship: to avoid, for the sake of the young – theirs and no less our own – what is inflammatory, tendentious and merely titillating for its own sake. Perhaps we need to make clearer than we have done, to those who have not learned the lesson: that we will not accept the slightest falsification of that particular period in history – whether for personal or political gain – and that we will fight such attempts wherever they occur.

But perhaps, above all, it is time that we say loud and clear to the young Germans that we do not consider the children responsible for the parents' sins; that we do not believe in inherited guilt; that we do not accept the transferred image of the 'ugly German'.

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New York Diary

☐ The great jogging craze proceeds unabated. I gaze out of my window over Central Park and see massed runners tottering around the reservoir. They now menace, in their hordes, the skateboard practitioners who complain that they cannot find an inch of clear road for proper acceleration. A 60-year-old collapsed in front of my building a couple of days ago and I had to trundle him to Lenox Hill Hospital in a taxi. The last words I heard him utter were to the effect that he was up to six miles a day and hoped for more larger triumphs.

The result will no doubt be a spate of deaths in three or four years from enlarged and – when the craze has waned – unexercised hearts. Cause and effect will remain undetected, in the same way as people retired to Florida wonder why so many die of cancer there, forgetting that many of these retirees worked in asbestos factories and the like in New Jersey 20 years before. Last I heard, Carl Bernstein was jogging 12 miles a day – which shows what the great Watergate era has come to.

☐ The city, as always with entities in financial trouble, faces constant deadlines – all of them bad. At the end of this week the municipal workers, negotiating a contract with City Hall, may well go on strike. This will mean mountains of garbage, no subways and much other horror besides. City Hall would like to settle but faces another deadline: imminent expiry of federal aid from Washington and the desperate need to get more cash from that quarter. But a decent settlement with city workers will mean eruptions of outrage in Washington at 'knuckling under' to the unions and a possible refusal by Congress to brass up.

Leading the fight against New York is Senator William Proxmire of Wisconsin. Proxmire is what they call a 'maverick': that is, a man who can't be bribed and who behaves oddly in other ways. He had fresh hair grafted onto his balding head a few years ago, runs five miles to work each morning and eats sardines for breakfast in his office on Capitol Hill. Proxmire says that New York should be more fiscally prudent and he will vote against further aid. Proxmire can say almost anything since he won 70 per cent of the vote in his last re-election, at an alleged overall cost of only a few hundred dollars.

Proxmire took over his Senate seat from Joe McCarthy in 1957 and therefore has built up much powerful seniority. New Yorkers often ask themselves why their elected representatives never achieve powerful seniority. The answer is that they invariably quit Washington to run for mayor. If elected they then return as beggars to Washington to search for New York senators or congressmen with seniority.

☐ Poor bankrupt New York, searching ardently for symbols of continuing vitality and burgeoning promise, has finally come up with the modern equivalent of a pyramid with which to assert itself to the rest of America. The modern equivalent to a pyramid is not a skyscraper but a superhighway: in this case a proposed ribbon of concrete known as Westway, which will run down the Lower West Side of Manhattan.

The last time the city fathers – in fact the Rockefellers, real estate tycoons, construction moguls, unions and attendant politicians – wanted to demonstrate vitality and make money in the early sixties they designed the Lower Manhattan Expressway, another ribbon of concrete which was intended to slice its way through Washington Square, Little Italy, and Chinatown before erupting triumphantly into the Wall Street area. It took a five-year fight by a curious coalition of middle-class villagers and Mafiosi in Little Italy to abort the plan and it was the greatest triumph of Jane Jacobs, who wrote *Death and Life of Great American Cities*, and moved to Toronto forthwith.

Among this mad scheme's most ardent opponents was Edward Koch. Campaigning vigorously against its descendant, namely Westway, he was elected as Mayor last November. A couple of weeks ago Koch bowed before money and power and said he favoured Westway after all. Soon the bulldozers will be moving and the strip of land bordering the Hudson where the transatlantic liners dock, will become elysium for the real estate operators, construction unions, insurance brokers etc who equate gold with concrete and whose support the pro-Westway Governor of New York State needs for re-election this year.

☐ As always the personality of New York seems to derive to a certain extent from the characteristics of the Mayor nominally in charge. John Lindsay was disastrously vigorous in a sixties sort of way, dashing about with his jacket over his shoulder. Abe Beame portended bankruptcy, his accountant's body stooping down towards the books with their red ink, and his gloomy face peering up into the eyes of creditors. Mayor Ed Koch comports himself with chipper petulance. He seems to be what you might term a micromaniac, making big scenes about odd things. He tells bankers that he will deal with the unions as he did with the Mayoral maid who refused to wash dishes. He threatened to lay her off. After the worst winter snowstorm in years he announced to eight million New Yorkers that 'God is testing me'. Heckled in a community meeting in Brooklyn he stormed out, saying that now he knew what the Jewish doctors felt about Stalin. And he conducted a citizen's poll before abandoning a dangerous old car for a majestic limousine.

Amidst this fine Democratic frenzy he announced his flouting of electoral promises and his support of the Westway scheme described above. He remains an ardent supporter of the death penalty, amid thoughtful suggestions by environmentalists that the instrument of justice should be a solar electric chair, powered – however gradually – by the sun. Thirty days of cloud cover and the condemned man would get off.

☐ Jimmy Carter, slightly less bedraggled after some populist ranting against lawyers and doctors in California and success for his arms package for the Middle East, is still not too popular in New York, where Israel has ardent support. His image is not helped by the antics of his evangelist sister Ruth Carter Stapleton, who is soon to appear in Long Island as a keynote speaker at a B'nai Yeshua conference. B'nai Yeshua means the Sons of Jesus. They ask Jews to become 'better' Jews by accepting Jesus. The long-suffering Jimmy not only has to put up with this sort of inconvenient publicity among the Jewish community, but also his dollar-conscious brother Billy, and now an uncle who has composed a book saying that Mizz Lillian, the President's mother, thought Rosalynn too low-class for her son. The uncle says piously, anent his tactless revelation, that 'Jimmy will understand'.

☐ For a sense of high male fashion and style in New York you have to ask yourself, what is the well dressed black pimp wearing? I say this with a certain amount of complacency since a black velour hat I happened to be wearing the other day drew a round of applause from a pride of pimps on the corner of 46th Street and Eighth Avenue.

The best place to check out the scene is of course the criminal courts building, where pimps forgather daily to bail out their girls. Keen inspection for an hour or so established the following: plus fours worn above long black or brown boots: a velvet jacket, draped over a single-colour silk shirt: velvet slouch hat, and – here's the touch separating the class pimps from the no-class pandars – a chihuahua or other diminutive hound is carried in the crook of the arm. So much for Gerard de Nerval and his lobster on the end of a blue ribbon.

Alexander Cockburn

This England

Prizes: £3 book tokens for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ The owner of a hairdressing salon who punched one of his staff in the face, dragged him across the salon floor and kneed him in the groin, said yesterday at an industrial tribunal in Birmingham that he had not dismissed him. – *The Times* (M. G. Plummer)

☐ Pensioner Charles Adams, aged 89, has been sent 138 rate demands by Lowestoft council in Norfolk. Council officials blame their computer. – *Daily Express* (Peter Davies)

☐ A keep fit class at Huddersfield has been suspended because of the sudden deaths of two of its members, aged 34 and 41. – *Financial Times* (Dominic Glynn)

☐ She gave up her job as a nurse to devote more time to her duties as a beauty queen. – *The Weekly News* (B. J. Sullivan)

☐ This is the first production of The Taming of the Shrew I have seen which is not infected with the deadly boisterousness of the Kiss Me Kate variety. Bogdanov has decided, rightly, that the play is essentially serious and relies on simple effects like the dropping of trousers to amuse us. – *Evening Standard* (Annabelle May)

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First Person

Arthur Marshall

As Time Goes By

Some readers probably imagine that the paragraphs they devour on these NS pages emerge precisely as, constructed in the mind with loving care, they left the writer's pen or, in my case, the writer's Olivetti. Not always the case by any means. One's output has to be fitted to the page, to be slotted in (I consider myself privileged to be so frequently wedged in with Woddis), and this means that one has occasionally to be lopped a little here or eked out a bit there. In the latter case, verbal material sometimes already rather thin can safely be thinned no further and two dozen or so suitable extra words must be assembled and boomed down the telephone to HQ. This can lead to confusions and I feel it is only proper that a recent confusion affecting adversely as it did the reputation of my old school, should be put right. I had, mouthing elaborately from deepest Devon, shrieked down the wires, clear as a bell I thought, that after our housemaster's hilarious moral lectures, we retired laughing to bed 'and cackled ourselves into the Land of Nod'. This came out as 'tackled ourselves . . .', bringing with it a suggestion of unusual physical activity, and at such an advanced hour, that is really most unfortunate.

Now, Oundle is a school rightly noted for many excellences, among them its present and past brilliance upon the rugger field. For many years we were, particularly between the wars, the scourge of the Midlands. Coached by a genius, the team used to defy all opposition, beating Rugby, downing Uppingham, trouncing Haileybury, squashing Bedford and, despite the presence among its forwards of the fleet-footed Lord Annan, totally annihilating Stowe (an agonised scream was allegedly once heard from the muddy depths of a Stowe mêlée, 'Humphrey, for pity's sake, you're standing on my hair!').

To be supposed to have said that we 'tackled ourselves into the Land of Nod', implies to rugger enthusiasts that there was some kind of late night football practice, encouraged by authority, in the dormitories, with pyjamaed figures darting wildly round bedsteads and 'going low', as the technical phrase has it. Could anything be more injurious to health or to the relaxed mind and body so essential for slumber? But to those quite unacquainted with these sporting terms, the resultant impression is yet more damaging. One must face facts, however displeasing, and the word 'tackle', carrying with it as it does a suggestion from the plumbing world of rude mechanical matters such as 'tools and equipment', makes the evening activities sound more injurious still. Therefore, let us remember it as 'cackle' and cut, as it were, the tackle.

And now to other considerations of equal importance. I am blessed with the kind of face that, for some reason, people like to talk at. No part of it – its beetroot hue, its pendulous jowls, its corrugated forehead – seems in any way to inhibit chat. Nothing is required of me but a pleasant and receptive expression, achieved by moistening the lips and leaving the mouth slightly ajar. Then on and on the words flow down their one-way street. It could hardly be called conversation, and indeed the incoming chat is sometimes liberally laced with actual conversation-stoppers. A recurring example of this is when the avalanche of words is concerning itself with the speaker's relations and he or she, gazing soulfully into the middle distance, says 'Just to think; if my father were alive today he would be 128!' This sentence is usually uttered in such a dreamily affectionate manner that one chokes back the wish to go one better and state the fascinating fact that if Attila the Hun were still with us, fully motorised and with Swiss bank accounts, he would be 1572 years old and just planning his 96th invasion of Italy, with Ladbrokes offering 100 to 1 on its successful outcome against that beautiful but falling apart country.

I said that I was 'blessed' to have a face that gets talked at because I happen, and increasingly as I get older, to be fond of almost the entire human race and to enjoy hearing what it has to say. Its general patience amazes me. Summoned involuntarily to this wicked world, plonked down in frequently hideous areas not of its own choosing, often starved and frightened and fighting for its life, it seems to me to complain much less than it is entitled to. It accepts woes and privations as its lot and generally preserves a dignified silence. Not that all woes are equal in sharpness, or indeed kept silent about. Recently, in what used rightly to be called its 'Agony' column, *The Times* printed the following *cri de coeur*: 'Mrs Ashbrooke-Pembleton would like to ask the young man who attended their party on Friday to immediately return the Land-Rover and kindly remove the Lamborghini from the croquet lawn.' I feel sure that no Ashbrooke-Pembleton would wilfully split an infinitive and therefore the indications are that the drafting and telephoning of this message was undertaken by another, summoned by a loud cry of dismay as the mobile intruder, far less inconvenient than a herd of cows, was discovered by the centre peg just before the needle match with Major Medlicott. Those who like to find silver linings no matter how thundery the clouds will rejoice that, should 'the young man' be gone for good, a Lamborghini for a Land-Rover seems a reasonable swop.

Somerset Maugham, speaking at a Garrick Club dinner to celebrate his seventieth birthday, said: 'There are many advantages attached to the p-p-process of growing old.' There followed a longish pause while other septuagenarians, or worse, leant keenly forward and prepared themselves to receive cheering tidings. 'But I can't for the life of me', Mr Maugham finally added, well knowing how to use that stammer to the best effect, 'remember w-w-what on earth they are.' I might respectfully suggest one. Fight it as one may, with age a kind of tolerance comes creeping in. Infuriations melt into mere amusements. Irritations dissolve into sympathies. One just feels sorry for mankind in general.

And to the fondess for one's fellow sufferers the whole world over, I confess to adding an idiotic and increasing fondness for material objects that have grown old along with one. Prior to my Olivetti, I was wedded to a Smith 'Chum' Portable, a supremely happy marriage that endured 37 years and terminated only in the machines complete disintegration. As with all married couples, portions of us ended up not quite as fresh as we began. Quite large pieces of its inside fell out from time to time but still we pounded on. We went through much together. At its keyboard I typed my first piece for the NS in 1935, heaven bless us all. As a housemaster, it helped me, chum indeed, with innumerable letters to parents ('I'm afraid that your poor old Nigel has got another "go" of pink eye . . .'). It went into battle, if such my share in it can be called, with me and on it I typed letters home, giving our official address, which was SHAEF FORWARD P.O. We were many many miles distant from Jerry but the word 'Forward' convinced my mother, ever one to think the best, that I was first across the Rhine, if not actually in that Berlin bunker itself, and with a knife at Hitler's throat.

Roger Woddis

Book Now!

Robben Island, which holds South Africa's political prisoners, may be turned into a pleasure centre.

From Afric's Table Mountain,
From Cape Town tourists tell
How sun and sand and fountain
Have made a heaven of hell.

Marinas for the asking,
A place to moor your yacht,
And languid bathers basking
Where others used to rot.

No noxious diseases
Afflict this pleasant isle,
Where every prospect pleases
And matches Vorster's smile.

The bones of men we built on
Were gently brushed aside
Before the Sjambok Hilton
Became the island's pride.

Swim in the seas around it,
Skim through a past report
From former guests who found it
To be their last resort.

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Letters to the Editor

Terrors of Unemployment

Sir, The view, expressed in your columns by Peter Porteous (NS Letters 12 May), that terrorism has 'everything to do with trying to find an economic way of living that deprives no one in their search for gainful and interesting employment' is a disturbing and simplistic vindication of evil and irrational acts of brutality. Of course unemployment is intolerable but so, too, is terrorism. Moreover, full employment will not alone solve all the problems. The naive wish-fulfilment of placing all responsibility for improvement upon State or employer ignores a hard fact of life. Justice demands that employment be 'gainful' but it cannot, alas, always be 'interesting'. Nor are employees always able to be hard-working and interested.

ALAN HURST

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Thirty Years On (3)

Sir, Having read your two (well-balanced) articles on Israel in the May 12 issue, and as a born and bred Briton and therefore (one could assume) unbiased, I cannot help wondering why it was that the Arabs, in all their decades of occupation of the West Bank, never bothered to found a Palestinian State?

LARRY ROSS

31 Brook Street
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Sir, Time was (1919) when a leading Arab statesman could write: 'We offer the Jews a hearty welcome home.' That was the Emir Faisal who in 1920 attempted to set up an Arab kingdom based on Damascus; an Arab kingdom to which the Palestinian Arabs gave their loyalty at the time. Since then the Arab World has become balkanised into separate little statelets and their main problem is not the setting up of yet another Arab state but Arab national unity. The Arabs have yet to find their Garibaldi or Bismarck to help them establish a united Arabia.

Professor Said's bitter article (NS 12 May) states that 'there is a national consensus that the other side means no good whatsoever'. This is emphasised in his story that the Israeli officer responsible for the Kafr Kassim massacre of 1956 was only fined one piaster. Needless to say this is hardly correct. The massacre was forthrightly condemned by Ben Gurion, the officer concerned was dismissed from the Army and sentenced to 17 years imprisonment, and the soldiers were sentenced to between 7 and 15 years each.

The first real glimmer of peace came on the horizon last November just before Israel's thirtieth birthday. The optimism of this is recognised by Paul Johnson in his article. Let us now hope that the Arab people will stop using war with Israel to hide their disunity, and instead start to see peace with Israel as a stage on their road to national unification.

DAVID M. JACOBS

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Sir, Paul Johnson (NS 12 May) considers Mr Begin an unsuitable Prime Minister of Israel because, among other reasons, 'he is a former terrorist who has never repudiated his past'. By forcing a British withdrawal from Palestine, the Irgun Zvai Leumi, under Begin's command, made possible the establishment of the State of Israel which Mr Johnson admires so much. It was the IZL's practice to give warnings when there was danger to civilian life, and on no occasion did they take hostages except with the aim of saving lives of rebels sentenced to death. Does Paul Johnson know of any other rebel army with such high standards?

A British attempt in 1946 to use the gallows to end the Irgun revolt was quickly abandoned when the IZL took three British officers hostage. In 1947, the Government again turned to the gallows, hanged and went on hanging rebels until the Irgun, having failed to seize senior officers, captured the sergeants, and when three more IZL men were executed, hanged them and so broke the last desperate British weapon.

Does Mr Johnson want racial discrimination in hanging and if he doesn't, how can he consider the hanging forced on the Irgun as an example of terrorism? And what should we say of a government which considers sergeants, but not officers, as fit for hanging?

MONTY ROCKOVITCH

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Sir, Paul Johnson's defence of modern Israel (NS 12 May) contains some references to ancient Israel which cannot pass without comment.

Johnson says that the Jews 'had prophets, whose work depended on popular suffrage, long before they had kings', and that 'when Samuel reluctantly anointed King Saul, a few years before 1000 BC, he gave a solemn and reasoned warning against the dangers of autocracy, the first such political statement to come down to us from antiquity'. If he really believes that the so-called historical books of the Jewish Bible are reliable, he should mention that the judges, prophets and kings are chosen by divine rather than popular suffrage and that Samuel's warning is purely religious. Most modern readers believe that these unpleasant stories are legends dating from several centuries after the events they claim to describe, and are no earlier or better than the political writings of ancient Greece and China.

Johnson says that 'the Hebrews were the great legislators of antiquity', and he contrasts 'the Pentateuch's respect for humanity' with 'the savage provisions of contemporary Assyrian law-codes'. The Jewish Torah is comparable not with the Assyrian codes but with the Babylonian and Sumerian codes which are more than a thousand years older than both and from which both are derived. Most modern readers find little respect for humanity in the Pentateuch.

Johnson says that the ancient Athenian democracy did not survive as well as the modern Israeli one. Athens, almost isolated in an undemocratic world, lasted ten times as long as Israel, supported by the strongest democracies in the world. Will Ben Gurion, Meir, Dayan and Begin be remembered like Solon, Thamistocles, Pericles and Demosthenes?

Johnson says that 'in Maccabean times it was the hatred of infanticide that was, perhaps, the biggest single factor in leading the Jews to reject Hellenistic civilisation'. The objectionable features of the Greek tyranny in the second century BC are listed as public games, prohibition of circumcision, intermarriage, sacrilege, idolatry, sabbath-breaking, and ritual pollution. There is no more reason to believe the story of Antiochus's murder of circumcised babies than the stories of Pharaoh's massacre of Hebrew babies or Herod's massacre of the Innocents, and there is no evidence that infanticide was a significant factor in the Hasmonean rebellion – especially in view of the repeated approval given to the practice in the Jewish Bible.

Johnson ends by saying that God gave the people of ancient Israel wisdom. Most modern readers find little evidence for this in the Bible.

Johnson criticises Begin for his tendentious use of the Bible. Is he really in a position to cast such a stone?

NICOLAS WALTER

Rationalist Press Association
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Basis of Fear

Sir, Does Mr Allaun really believe (Letters 12 May) that the fear of the military capacity of the Soviet Union, from which the 'scaremongering' and 'warmongering' of the British press derives its popular potency, is purely a product of debased journalism and the hysterical utterances of Blimps like Neil Cameron? Surely the point is that such fear has a very real basis, unrelated to the existence or non-existence of arms parity, but stemming rather from the reasonable supposition that one side (Soviet Union) is more likely to use its military capabilities than the other.

In this context I would direct Mr Allaun to a remark of A. D. Sakharov's in *My Country and the World* that '. . . . the strategic doctrines and practices of a totalitarian state may prove more ruthless towards the population of its own country and toward all mankind, more adventuristic and more subject to accidents governed by personal factors and decisions secretly taken, than is the case in a democratic state.'

Surely the point is that 'warmongering' and 'scaremongering' will not end with successful balanced force reductions, but only when these are tied to a weakening of the totalitarian nature of the Soviet Union. It would perhaps be more fruitful in future, therefore, if Mr Allaun linked his laudable aspirations for the success of the disarmament talks this summer, with an unambiguous condemnation of the denial of human rights in the Eastern bloc.

NOEL THOMPSON

Peterhouse
Cambridge

Home to Roost?

Sir, May I spring to the defence of my old opponents across Smith Square at the Conservative Central Office? (NS 5 May). Their slogan was not 'Never Had It So Good' which was, in fact, an adventitious remark by Harold Macmillan but 'Life's Better With the Conservatives – Don't Let Labour Ruin It'. This was their winning slogan and, in my view, the most effective produced by any party since the war.

I have much sympathy with their successors now struggling with an almost impossible task and with the alarming prospect of countering the slogan – Life's Better with Labour – Don't Let The Tories Ruin It'.

BRIAN MURPHY

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No better than Denning

Sir, Doesn't Christopher Price realise (Westminster Diary 5 May) that Lord Denning has no betters and certainly no elders?

DAVID RICHARDS

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

E. J. Hobsbawm

Labours of Love

The Letters of Sidney and Beatrice Webb edited by Norman Mackenzie *Cambridge/LSE* 3 vols £60

The interests of writers and reviewers – perhaps even of readers – in the late Victorian, Edwardian and Georgian intellectuals are remarkably selective. Bloomsbury flourishes, while the early Fabians are out, in spite of Professor Norman Mackenzie's efforts, of which these three volumes of the Webb *Letters* is the latest – and will perhaps be the most effective. The politics of the great first-generation Fabians are out of fashion – they were never really in fashion – and their interest in sexual heterodoxy was slight. Though Fabians as a whole were far from celibate, there is not much mileage to be got out of the sex-life of Bernard Shaw, and the main question about that of the Webbs is whether there was any. This is no way to attract circulation nowadays.

Since Shaw, alive or dead, has always been able to look after his own public relations, the main victims of this neglect have been the Webbs; or more precisely Beatrice Webb, the most remarkable British woman of her time. For, taken by himself, Sidney was a figure of the second rank, though an enormously effective one. The *Letters* show him to have been a complex, passionate and engaging person rather than the human data-bank, drafting-machine and back-room tactician of his public image. He has been ill-served by his unparalleled capacity to improve other people's output, including his wife's. Indeed, his early letters are, biographically speaking, much the most interesting part of the Webb correspondence, and his long epistolary courtship of Beatrice much the most touching. Her own letters, with few exceptions, are not a patch on her remarkable and only partly published diaries. After the marriage the correspondence loses interest, except to historians. Professor Mackenzie, who has edited it remarkably well, was right to devote one volume to 12 early years, and only two to the subsequent half-century.

The young Sidney emerges as a rather appealing fellow, a sort of Mr Pooter marching to the left through a succession of examinations and debating societies, into the milieu of the world reformers. There, among self-made lower-middle-class intellectuals, a sprinkling of radical young Oxbridge graduates, the independent career-women, progressive wives of tolerant stockbrokers, and semi-bohemian political lecturers who frequented Fabian meetings, he met that extraordinary daughter of the established Liberal bourgeoisie, Beatrice. He read Goethe, George Eliot, Rossetti, Browning, Tolstoy and Zola (though he ceased to quote them after his marriage), as well as forgotten second-rate novels which perhaps influenced him more deeply.

As he discovered his enormous abilities, he developed an agreeably cocky but misplaced confidence in one day being Prime Minister, and a taste for sub-Shavian provocations: Scribe was a better dramatist than Sophocles. He agonised over the problems of life and love, and remained virginal. His qualities were recognised both by his peers and by Liberal politicians anxious to keep up with the new democracy, and he would certainly have made a place for himself in 20th-century British history. The most readily identifiable practical achievements of the Webbs were his work: the educational system of London (including the LSE) and the constitution and structure of the modern Labour Party, achieved during the fortunate spell of absence of Ramsay MacDonald. And yet – by himself he would pretty certainly never have made it to a grave in Westminster Abbey.

Beatrice, on the other hand, was genuinely extraordinary. Not many Victorian girls would have been chosen as literary executrix by Herbert Spencer. As her autobiographical writings demonstrate, she would have been extraordinary even if she had not been one of the very few women of her times who, like Rosa Luxemburg and Marie Sklodkowska-Curie, won unqualified eminence outside the fields traditionally associated with feminine activities in a male-dominated society, which included literature. It is not surprising that she was forced into great and psychologically damaging emotional sacrifices by her vocation (in both the lay and religious senses of the word), though the escape from the British bourgeois environment may have been unusually difficult.

Beatrice's greatness needs asserting, since her lack of enthusiasm for contemporary feminists has not helped her reputation. For though in 1906 she formally announced that she had 'ceased to object to the grant of the electoral franchise to women' (against which she had once signed a manifesto), she made her poor opinion of the suffragette leaders clear, at least in private. Certainly Sidney was a much more single-minded and orthodox feminist than his wife. Her own feminism, naturally, was profound but peculiar, if only because she disliked talk of 'rights', much preferring 'duties', and did not much like equality either. Marx's 'From each according to ability, to each according to need' appealed to her, when she discovered it, just because it was not a slogan of mechanical egalitarianism.

It is equally clear that Beatrice was the intellectually dominant element in the partnership, and that without Sidney she would probably have written nothing of major significance, except of course her remarkable diaries. Most of what we associate specifically with 'the Webbs' is originally hers, from the interest in trade unions to the late passion for Soviet communism, not to mention the evangelists' zeal. But what exactly *do* we associate with them?

Their achievement is debatable in both practice and theory. Their only unquestioned heritage is a series of volumes of quite monumental scholarship, still far from obsolete, written in a uniformly grey style which conceals generally unpopular opinions. For during most of their marriage the Webbs were politically and ideologically isolated, a fact of which Beatrice seems to have been much more conscious than Sidney. From the late 1890s on, as often as not, hostility, sometimes disguised as humorous contempt, hedged them in like barbed wire.

Their dedication was too obviously puritanical; their dislike of the rich and their temptations was reciprocated. People in politics suspected their genuine indifference to parties and organisations, including the Fabian society, except as they suited their tactics. Their pragmatism was not even justified by good political judgment, for they backed wrong horses with some regularity and Sidney became an undistinguished MP and Minister. The establishment rightly distrusted them as socialists. The Left dismissed them as enemies of the class struggle and so gradualist as to be hardly socialists at all, though even in 1913 Sidney was prepared to make out a case for soundly based general strikes and Beatrice's war aims in 1916 were that 'the propertied classes of all belligerents [should be] mulcted and the working classes [should] suffer sufficiently to make them revolutionary'. So long as anyone took notice of them, someone denounced them with passion.

This was not due only to Sidney's skill in backroom battles, or to Beatrice's unconcealed sense of superiority, which outfaced even Bloomsbury. Ladies of her class, however heterodox, took superiority for granted and, after all, spiritual pride was her only earthly reward. It was largely due to the fear that they might be right. For the Webbs were the most eminent British representatives of the theorists who, between 1880 and 1914, tried to discover how modern states actually worked, and in doing so shattered platform and editorial rhetoric.

They observed that private and group interests in society would not cancel out into the general good through markets, checks and balances or corporate confrontations, that the real, complex and technical decisions of government must escape from the votes of amateurs into the hands of professional experts, and that most citizens were neither very bright nor very rational on most matters. They were criticised for recommending what they spent their time trying to control. Far from being worshippers of the state, they devoted their works to voluntary organisations and local government, and disliked nationalisation. They sought (vainly) for a mechanism to control and counteract bureaucracy by a system of 'independent advisers' not involved in decision-making. They believed in the democratic strength of the Labour movement and

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praised the power and flexibility of British representative institutions, especially in local government. And they were convinced that 'it is only by carrying with him the "average sensual man" that even the wisest and most philanthropic reformer, however autocratic his power, can genuinely change the face of things'. Students of the USSR may find it easier today than the Webbs did in the early 1930s to see how true this is.

They did not find satisfactory solutions for the problems they were among the first to identify. But who has? Politically, their career was largely misconceived. Intellectually, their ideas, when not denounced, have been startlingly ignored, not least in the universities. After all, they deliberately refrained from the life of pure research. Perhaps luckily for them, they are not even the gurus of some tiny sect. Are the decades of enormous devotion and effort commensurate with the results? Probably not.

And yet, if we can admire lives and works dedicated to the greater glory of a god in whom we do not believe, can we deny equal admiration to lives devoted, with equal self-abnegation, to socialism, a purpose in which many of us do believe? Beatrice, who once said that all the good in the world had been done by priests and prigs, would have approved the comparison. Sidney was comfortable in a more mundane form of selflessness, for he loved her. The three volumes of their correspondence are, among many other things, a monument to his love, on which the work of both of them rested.

WHAT DO WOMEN WANT?

Self-Discovery Through Fantasy

by LUCY FREEMAN

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MAY 1978 £5.95

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James Fenton

Clues to the Holocaust

Freud, Jews and Other Germans by PETER GAY *Oxford* £5.50

One of the errors of the Whig interpretation of history, according to Butterfield, was a kind of retrospective modernisation of its subjects: Luther, for instance, was seen as the founder of the modern secular state – a development which Luther himself would have regarded with horror. It was the task of the historian, Butterfield argued, to show rather what divided Luther from our time, what made his assumptions and beliefs entirely different from those of later generations. This may be hard enough with Luther, but how much harder is it with a subject such as the Jews in 19th-century Germany. There the force of hindsight really does make us lose sight of the complexity of the processes at work. If we look to German history for clues to the holocaust, lo and behold, we find them in abundance – sometimes in the form of prophetic writings too. But if we search German history *only* for clues to the holocaust, we are yielding to a notion of predestination which most of us would never allow to infect our view of the present. We denature history, by the glib exclusion of all possibilities other than the one which was actually realised.

Peter Gay has an attractive cast of mind. On the one hand, he rejects the thesis that the Nazi period is a mere aberration, an 'alien import' or a 'grotesque interlude, with no substantial ties to the German past'. On the other hand, he turns his back on that 'false determinism, amounting to fatalism, which draws strength from the plausible but circular arguments that what happened is proof that it had to happen because, after all, it happened'. The work of contingency is ubiquitous, often subterranean.

> Most events are the vectors of competing, irreconcilable forces which might well have issued in other, far different consequences, or in no consequences at all. History is the actualisation of the potential. Compared to the mass of possibilities inherent in any situation, the number of possibilities realised is small . . . In this sense, history is an implacable Darwinian battle, in which few aspirants succeed in fighting their way into the permanent record.

So, while the possibilities confronting Germany in the early Thirties were dramatically reduced, while an authoritarian regime seemed inevitable, the Nazi regime itself remained until 1932, in Gay's view, only one of several prominent possibilities.

If one adopts this kind of approach, and if one recognises hindsight to be a real problem, one is in a better position to examine the history of the German-Jewish question in all its complexity. For while it may be said of contemporary anti-Semitism that it knows what it is about (with the exception, I suppose, of the child who calls a stingy friend a Jew), the same cannot generally be said of the 19th-century varieties. There were many of them, and they were *about* quite different things. Most pathetic, perhaps, was the anti-Semitism of the established Jew who considered himself a good German, and who looked with a mixture of contempt and embarrassment at the new wave of Yiddish-speaking immigrants from Eastern Europe. His attitude represented an attempt to deflect the dislike. (It has a parallel in contemporary Germany in the attitude of the Italian migrant worker, who considers himself to be a civilised man, a European, as opposed to these unspeakable Turks, who are 'the problem'.) A part of assimilation into German-ness, it turned out, had to be the assimilation of anti-Semitism.

Such a Jewish German might, quite naturally, be a fervent supporter of his adopted traditions, and might never know how ill his support was received. When the novelist Theodor Fontane reached his 75th birthday, he found that the Prussian aristocracy appeared to have forgotten the event. Instead he received hundreds of letters of congratulation from Jews. He was surprised, and in a way pleased that he had such a devoted audience of ancient, if exotic, nobility. He even composed a poem on the subject. Yet a short while afterwards we find him writing to a friend that the Jews have failed the 'test' of emancipation:

> They are irritants everywhere (much more than they used to be earlier), they mess up everything, obstruct the contemplation of every problem for its own sake. Even the most optimistic have had to convince themselves that baptismal water is not enough. Despite all its gifts, it is a horrible people, not a 'sour dough' yielding vitality and freshness but a leaven in which uglier forms of fermentation abound – a people afflicted from its very origins with a kind of conceited vulgarity, which the aryan world cannot get along with. What a difference between the Christian and the Jewish criminal world! And all of this, ineradicable.

That kind of talk is both familiar and foreign – what does Fontane mean by the charge that they 'obstruct the contemplation of every problem for its own sake'? And what does he have in mind as to the difference between the Jewish and Christian criminal world? The answer seems to be: nothing. He goes on: 'I say all this (*must* say it), even though I have had, in my own person, nothing but good from Jews right down to this day.'

These were the private sentiments of a man known publicly for his cordial relations with Jews. They go much further than the whacky anti-Semitism of the cartoonists of the period (which, incidentally, had a parallel in England), but they could hardly be said to have reached Wagnerian proportions. It is when Gay gets anywhere near Wagner that he seems most ready for a fight. There is here a spirited defence of Eduard Hanslick, the influential music critic whom Wagner pilloried as Beckmesser in the *Meistersinger*, and, perhaps the best essay in this excellent collection, an account of Wagner's *Parsifal* conductor, Hermann Levi.

This is a classic study of Jewish self-hate.

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Levi was a great conductor, and a man of catholic musical tastes, who found himself forced to make the choice between Wagner and his former friends (including Brahms). He chose Wagner, and became a passionate worshipper of the Cause. He persuaded himself, and did his best to persuade his rabbi father, that Wagner's hatred of 'Jewry' in music and modern literature sprang from 'the noblest of motives', that Wagner was wholly free of 'petty Jew-hatred' (presumably Jew-hatred was more excusable on a grand scale). He took it on the chin when Wagner, after hearing him conduct *Lohengrin* and having noted dozens of false tempi, read him a lecture on the racial origin of these errors, and continued, for good measure, with a discussion on 'the depressing, destructive influence of Jewry on our public affairs', against which he warned Levi 'emphatically'.

Life with the Wagners seems to have been like this all the time. The anguish of Levi over whether he should convert provided them with a fascinating theme – of course, Cosima Wagner told him not long before his death that while he could become a Christian, he could never become a Teuton. Naturally, she lied, she preferred the Christian to the Teuton. As it happened, Levi was necessary to the Wagners – whether because he was the only one who could conduct *Parsifal*, or whether because their viciousness needed victims, is unclear.

The viciousness certainly brought them admirers. As Houston Stewart Chamberlain wrote to Cosima Wagner: 'A marvellous testimonial to your vitality, *hochverehrte Meisterin*, is the way you have of chastising someone, when he deserves to be chastised.' On the one occasion when Levi, after Wagner's cruelty had pushed him to the limit, decided to leave, he was cajoled into returning, with a promise that there would now be a possibility for him really to get to know the Wagners properly. He took little persuading, and, although the Master indicated to others that there was something sinister in having the Jew around, he was honoured on his return. Eventually he received the greatest honour of all – he was a pallbearer at Wagner's funeral. As Gay writes: 'He left the best part of himself in that grave. But the Cause lived on, and so did Hermann Levi – to serve it.'

Ian McEwan

Enigma Machine

The Secret War by BRIAN JOHNSON *BBC* £6.50

When Benjamin Franklin wrote, 'Three may keep a secret if two of them are dead', he evidently failed to take the British into account. By 1945 well over 10,000 men and women were involved at various levels in the 'Ultra' secret in and around Bletchley Park, and by 1974 not one of them had uttered so much as a public squeak. That year F. W. Winterbotham braved the Official Secrets Act and published a tantalising but sketchy account. The first official disclosures were made in October 1977 when the Public Record Office released a flood of deciphered 'Ultra' messages.

In case you have not been let in on the Ultra secret yet, it refers to the process by which cryptanalysts, mathematicians and chess-players, aided by the Polish Intelligence Services, cracked complex German codes early on in the war. The German encoding machine was known as 'Enigma'. At Bletchley machines called 'bombes' simulated all the possible settings of Enigma until a plaintext German message was arrived at. From then on a great deal of enemy signals traffic was read, and important – perhaps vital – decisions were taken on the basis of it.

Ultra certainly altered the course of the Battles of France and of Britain, the Invasion of Sicily, the North African Campaign and the D-Day landings. Clearly there is some history to be re-written. And while the Cabinet Office drags its feet over releasing all the Bletchley material, pseudo-historians, making wild guesses on the basis of minimal information, are doing that rewriting. It is certain that there is a great deal of money to be made writing about Ultra. Next to keeping a secret we all love to hear a few divulged. Already two best-sellers have claimed that the war Cabinet

The New Statesman's Literary Editor might be reluctant to publish a review of his own new novel. Here is what some other papers said

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had two days' warning, through Ultra, of the bombing of Coventry, and that they let it to be bombed without even strengthening its air defences rather than have the Germans suspect they were reading their codes. This is almost certainly not true, although it is now widely believed.

It could well be that those responsible for releasing Ultra material are liberal-arts know-nothings, trained up in the British lore of secrecy-for-its-own-sake, who cannot understand the extent to which the material, much of it scientific, is now out of date. Another possible explanation is that after the war the British sold off a number of Enigma-type machines to Third World countries – Uganda and Malaya have been mentioned. While HMG was listening to the encoded messages of these states it would have been faintly embarrassing to have the Enigma code-breakers of Bletchley celebrated in print. After all, the machines were meant to be foolproof. It has been suggested, though not yet in any book, that the use of Enigma by the Malayans accounted for the unique successes of the British Army in the Malayan jungle.

Many of those involved in Ultra at the highest level are now dead. Among those who survive there is at least one serious historian who feels that unless the appropriate material is made available to him soon, he will be too old to undertake the exacting task of writing a thorough account. And there are those at Bletchley who designed and constructed an advanced electronic computer – the first of its kind – who are embittered because their work has been obscured by spurious secrecy. No information has been released about the high-level codes which this computer, the Colossus, deciphered. And thousands of others who, on the basis of the 'need to know' procedure, knew only enough to do their jobs, have only recently discovered, if at all, the meaning of their oppressively repetitive work at Bletchley Park.

It is all the more damning of this lust for hush that the most informative account of Ultra to date is to be found in one chapter of a BBC book-of-the-programme. Brian Johnson's *The Secret War* describes the technological race between the British and the Germans – measure followed by counter-measure, gadget by gadget-defeating gadget. As such it is strongly exploitative, with its captioned pictures and scientific-looking diagrams, of a vast, exclusively male book-buying public who will read anything about the second world war. *The Secret War* is one of the best-selling hardbacks of the year. Radio beams, radar, terror weapons, U-boat counter-measures – all that was once most secret is there for your nephew, or uncle, to read.

As a liberal-arts know-nothing with gadget-susceptibilities of my own, I fell for the top-secret wash-outs: the one-man stretcher, or a jet aeroplane powered by a substance so volatile that it would spontaneously combust on contact with an organic substance (like a passing bee, or an airman's handkerchief), or the converted jeep that would be towed through the air and then drift to the ground like a sycamore leaf. And best of all, the Panjanandrum – two ten-foot wheels joined to a central drum packed with 4,000 lbs of explosive, propelled by rockets like a gigantic catherine-wheel. This quaint, medieval engine was meant to streak across the surf, up the beach and blast a hole through the Atlantic Wall. It was tested before holiday crowds at Westward Ho beach and may have been part of a ruse to persuade the Germans that the D-day landings would be at the Pas de Calais where the wall was thickest.

All this is honest, crowd-pulling stuff, meticulously researched. It is clear, both from Johnson's account and R. V. Jones's *Most Secret War*, that a great deal of scientific intelligence came to the British through Ultra. In his final chapter Johnson sets out in detail how knowledge of the Enigma machine came from Poland via France to Britain. Almost certainly he is the first to do so. And in his account of the hardware, the bombes, the Colossus and the Enigma itself, he reveals more than anyone else so far. And yet it is disappointing, whatever our boyish enthusiasms, that he should go no further than mere gadgetry. From Johnson's own chapter-notes it is clear he had access to sources who would have been prepared to tell him more. Evidently a policy decision has been made – banknotes rule.

Gathering intelligence, however complicatedly, is ultimately not as interesting or decisive as the use to which it is put. Some of the most important work at Bletchley consisted of studying the translated German plaintext and its implications with the

This English

Numbering, like nearly everything else in language, is not a question of pedantry ('The emperor's drunken soldiery are abed' – no grammarian would quarrel with that) so much as of trusting one's inner ear. Our first two examples offend the eye too, with their see-sawing inconsistencies; but the second two might also have been expected to give a corrective thump to the brainbox. £3 for the first entry, £2 for the others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

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aid of extensive card-index systems built up in the course of the war. Appropriate information and analysis was passed on to the relevant centres of command. The history of Ultra, and therefore of countless strategic decisions taken during the war, cannot be written until papers concerning the intelligence work on the decoded messages and the responses to them have been made available. Sorry, chaps, it's still all frightfully hush-hush.

Eric Sams

Cipher Cushions

The Hidden War by R. A. HALDANE *Hale* £4.50

Who is now winning the code war, which is so vastly more vital than the cod war, or even the cold war? On the historical front at least, much ground has recently been gained. The secret vaults are being opened, and their crypts are crammed with cryptology. We can leave to one side the technical provisions that only the specialist will relish or can digest; there is still an endless supply of food for thought and research. Thus the personalities and achievements of individual codebreakers can now be studied and evaluated. A start has already been made in the recent sketches of William Friedman and Dillwyn Knox, while the biography of Alan Turing now being written by Dr Andrew Hodges will delve much deeper into the historical field. Who was really breaking whose ciphers, by what agencies and methods; how were the texts disseminated, and with what results? Dr David Kahn's investigations of the German wartime archives will also no doubt disclose new data and discoveries. The corresponding British records are now coming under close and keen scrutiny from Dr Christopher Andrew and others. The secret war of scientific intelligence has been re-fought and re-thought by Dr R. V. Jones in a recent book: he acknowledges the help given by cipher intelligence, notably from Bletchley Park, the official history of which is now being written.

So after years of rationing much exciting new material is at last becoming available. This is the moment chosen by R. A. Haldane to unfold yet again the well-worn homespun of the postwar decades (stirring tales of Soviet spy-rings, naval warfare, special operations and so on) stretched and patched with strained and second-hand references to codes and ciphers. It was certainly a good idea to draw the threads together, as the last of ten shortish chapters characteristically puts it; but the flimsiness is still nakedly evident, and the gaps are still yawning. So will readers be, after repeated doses of such anodyne formulae as 'we cannot but conclude that code and cipher services played a vital part', or, more ambitiously, 'it is probably the opinion of the majority of cryptographers that in the construction of ciphers the Russians are about as good as anybody'. The confession of ignorance is often even more specific; we don't really know this, can't possibly fathom that, won't ever guess the other. Perhaps this is what the blurb means by 'a unique book': the text offers so many more qualifications than the author.

But like a good Intelligence Officer, Mr Haldane certainly has his Sources of Information, as he ingenuously titles his rather inaccurate and undiscriminating four-page list of over 150 books consulted. Whether their writers were consulted is less clear; to call them 'contributors' seems almost comically candid. The acknowledged contributions take up over 500 references; plainly, much depends on their reliability and the use made of them. The first source-book I checked was withdrawn by its publishers over 20 years ago, following a libel action. Another author and publisher listed have also paid punitive damages for libel in the same field.

Even when credentials are good, we should carefully study the references provided. Take David Kahn's well-known and carefully documented compendium *The Codebreakers*. His typically energetic first-hand research on the Yamamoto assassination unearthed 'a cover-story . . . to the effect that Australian coastwatchers had radioed in . . . the information, probably getting it from friendly natives around

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by Eric Clough and Jacqueline Quarmby
Just published £14.50 (£11.60 to LA members) ISBN 0 85365 510 3

This book surveys the social, cultural and religious backgrounds of the principal ethnic minorities in Great Britain: the Poles; the West Indians; the Indians; the Pakistanis and Bangladeshis; the African Asians; the Chinese; the Cypriots and Southern Europeans. The authors analyse statistically the use in six London boroughs of the public library facilities by both adults and children in these minorities. The facts which emerge will also apply to many other areas.
David Lane, chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality writes in his Foreword:
'I congratulate the authors on their comprehensive approach and their many constructive suggestions.'

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Rabaul'. Thus page 335 of the heavily abridged paperback edition, which is the source-book cited. The Haldane version runs as follows: 'a cover story was devised to the effect that watchers on the coast of Australia had obtained the information, probably from natives on Rabaul . . .' The quotation marks here are mine; but Mr Haldane is welcome to them, and in my view badly in need of them. It is surely insufficient just to acknowledge a general indebtedness when a particular passage is being so closely followed. On that basis, any unknown factor could readily be raised to a higher power of scholarship just by adding an index figure. All the other references I checked further exemplified what seems to me an impermissible use of source-material, whether by insufficient acknowledgement, textual garbling, or plain incomprehension. On my analysis the book itself is a cipher, in style as well as content.

It is fair to record a dissentient voice. The blurb announces that this story has never before been told. No doubt much depends on what is meant by telling stories; but personally I found this claim the only really surprising piece of intelligence in the book, whose title seems only too apt.

Zahir Jamal

Bambini

History by ELSA MORANTE *Allen Lane* £5.95
Mrs Reinhardt and Other Stories by EDNA O'BRIEN *Weidenfeld* £4.95
Hurry On Down by JOHN WAIN *Secker & Warburg* £4.50

History weeps for its children and will not be comforted. The ruined progeny of Elsa Morante's vast processional narrative are the brutalised poor of Rome's fetid slums bombed out in Mussolini's unbelievable war. ('A few thousand dead will be worth it for a seat at the peace table.') Reading harrowingly enough as a monumental tragedy of small folk, *History* disconcerts by taking its charges' littleness quite literally.

Ida Mancuso – the middle-aged, half-Jewish widow struggling to raise her delinquent Nino and her bastard by rape, the miraculous child Useppe – is herself 'little more than a child'. Nino – uncontrollable, self-seeking, loveless, flirting with the Blackshirts, male prostitution and later the communists and gun-running – remains in all his guises 'a little boy playing the brigand'. Old Secondo, the dotty, homeless invalid bent on fighting with the Partisans, flies to *join them 'like a schoolboy on vacation'*. The youthful Giovannino, separated from his girl-bride when ordered to the Russian front, signs his letters home 'your Son and Husband' and dies in a foetal position deliriously asking his mother's forgiveness for 'the stink of shit' from his togs; Carulina, the tiny hovel-mother of twins, dressing her daughters 'like dolls' and identifying them by coloured ribbons, is actually 15 and gets her first real doll from a client in her subsequent profession; the vicious orphan Nello, pimp and eventual killer of his mother-surrogate, the elderly prostitute Santina, remembers with hatred the confiscation in his childhood institution of a teddy bear; and, only to end the list, Useppe himself, the magical, doomed child of violation whose gift of happiness irradiates the novel's crowded play-room in the charnel-house.

History, combed, is mother's history. 'Power to some, servitude to the others': but always for mothers and children the hell of enduring earth. Across populous reaches of feeling Morante speaks inconsolably for those martyred by hostilities as intelligible to them as the Punic wars; but her damaged children are figments of a grief that rejects actual history. Active destinies, efforts to win sense from the bewildering criss-cross of private and public catastrophe, are made, however painfully, by men and women. There are no men and women under mothering eyes, only grown children whose hurts must always seem an outrage and whose deaths can only be premature. The source of Morante's compassion, actual and sobering, is also the limit of her reach. Her fascists, communists and anarchists may talk endless politics but she stopped listening long ago to mourn her dead *bambini*. A human position, certainly. But a back turned to history in a novel of that title is a liability – and in one hailed as the most important fiction from Italy since the war it becomes a riddle. Or is it just that Morante's tragic indifferentism, earned in her own imagination, provides for her contemporaries what fiction's griefs often do? A reputable exit from history's tangle, the one through which violence follows shortly after?

Not many of Edna O'Brien's women have to worry about children any longer. That, it seems, is the trouble. Getting married, getting families or just getting by, the ladies have also been getting on. These now wonder if they'll ever get through, while those are contemplating getting out or perhaps just getting some. Women of a certain age and Miss O'Brien's fiction cast their own spells; and the susceptible will fall eagerly on these nine stories and three novellas, all of which meet the requirements of the higher problem-page addict. With some, indeed, it's almost possible to suspect parody. Eleanor's problem, for instance, is a Channel-commuting case of self-destruct, her married lover. He it is who, despite his wife's habit of calling him names like 'vagina', cannot tear himself free from her wiles. She does things, he explains pinkly, to keep him tied down. Rightly suspicious, Eleanor demands that he sleep apart from this ogress. When the arrangement breaks down, the following conversation ensues between mistress and guilty lover:

'You mean you did,' she said.
'In the morning I'm always, a man is always . . .'
'You went in?'
'I didn't ejaculate.'

Then there's Julia's case. Julia is by the Med forgetting Rod. This, bizarrely, entails

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chasing after and screwing his spitting-image, Roderigo. But the new Rod's technique lacks something or other and Julia still hankers after her old hot Rod. Suddenly the conviction that all, all is sham grips her. All, that is, except fish. Fish contains phosphorous and phosphorous enriches the brain. A better brain, Julia reasons soundly, is what she needs. Then she can forget Rod with it. Gargantuan fish courses follow. With an aquarium inside her and the smell of shellfish creeping 'under her nails, into her hair, on to her scalp, in her ear lobes', Julia stinks but begins to mend.

However, the impression that Miss O'Brien has taken to wild satire must, regrettably, be discarded. A smart tap to her characters' skulls still excites, after the customary delay, that tremulous bird-song which in romantic fiction passes as feeling-ful thought. Despite sexual goings-on and carefully rationed obscenities, the old pieties remain unbemired. Jill sticks with Jack, the marriages usually lurch forward, the single ladies meet their plights with dignity. A subversive instinct for the freakish is channelled harmlessly away into special effects: wind, rain, 'atmosphere'. Talents that could set Miss O'Brien up in farce tomorrow are culpably neglected.

Hurry On Down is back sporting hard covers to celebrate 25 years in the business. Wain's new introduction repeats, for those who might have forgotten, that he was angry before any of the others were. Do the 'Angries' still speak to our condition? The question is, of course, false. There never was such an obligingly tidy movement, only a mood variously expressed. As comic narrative, the picaresque fortunes of Charles Lumley begin to date. The present inclination turns away from anger to disgust; and our preference now is for pugnacity experienced in the grotesque. As protest, Wain's novel, by its own admission, was a non-starter: 'I never rebelled against ordinary life . . . I never even got into it.' Keeping out, staying loose, staying neutral were its terms. Our understanding today of the impossibility of that pose came about largely because novels like Wain's proved it: but what cuts them off now, what may give them almost a period charm, is their notion of a hopeful compromise. That has virtually gone.

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

John Coleman

A Story of O

The big, escalating bother of our time is not just that there is so much to know but how you know what you ought to know. As a grizzled parent with a son about to do his O-levels and a daughter having had to perm her subjects (and hence her future) against a two-year run-in towards the same, a process that makes doing the pools seem like a doddle, I have recently been exercised to the hilt. The ensuing, extremely hesitant proposals should be read, then, as a sketchy scenario, notes bearing on a definition of culture – and time-out for intelligent amusement. They also reflect utterly selfish pleasure taken in learning on my own account. The best of the books for adolescents turn out to be a refresher-course in facts for a Matric-groomed adult too steeped in adjudicating on fictions, cinematic and literary. Briefly, I have enjoyed myself: and am once again conscious that the world is full of a number of things.

In terms of syllabus, D. G. Mackean's *Introduction to Biology* (John Murray £3.95) is a beauty, very cheap at the price. This is a re-issue of a best-seller much used in schools, celebrating its second million in sales by going coloured. As a staid, step-by-step coverage of a huge area of knowledge, it agreeably settles for rigour of text while allowing for an enlivenment of illustration. It enshrines the sort of devoted competence that makes you wonder why such nebulous 'subjects' as Eng. Lit. flourish. In the same field of observable phenomena falls a little batch of simpler stuff, seen at its worst in Edi Lanners and Noldi Lutz's *Eyes* (Black £1.75), which wastes too much of its space on adoring snaps of a long-haired son. Better value is David A. Hardy's *Light and Sight* (World's Work Ltd £3.50), which couples elegant colour drawings with a more than competent text, embracing some history and as up-to-date as holograms. His associated volume (same price and publisher), *Air and Weather*, should help even the thickest to decode those Monty-Pythonish TV met-reports. If all this seems expensive, a firm word is in order for a clutch of super Pocketbooks (Usborne 65p), Spotter's Guides to *Birds*, *Trees*, *Garden Flowers*, *Wild Flowers*, *The Seashore*, and *Rocks & Minerals*, really fine fodder for the deeply-bored walker. A lot of the worst of life, after all, is the sense of ignorance, rebelling without a because.

Having recently endured the humiliation of being asked, 'What is Communism, daddy?' (a trip to Highgate Cemetery and the brute bust of Karl Marx, surrounded by a drilled Chinese delegation, hardly helped), I am profoundly grateful for a couple of items in Hamish Hamilton's 'People and Politics' series (£4.50 apiece). Rex Winsbury's *Communism* reads quite a lot of news quite lucidly, even explaining that damnable word 'dialectic' in a way I could understand. Perhaps not so oddly, it feels a better buy than the matching *Capitalism*, by Peter Donaldson and Harold Pollins, which has one lovely phrase about 'the decline of deference', referring to the uppity behaviour of the unions. Let it be said, both these volumes aim at a balance, at best suggesting all is not sweet in our body politic. Adjuncts to these would be a very useful work for O-level candidates, Katharine Savage's *The Story of British Trade Unions* (Kestrel Books £3.25), which tucks in a shrewd number of the important names – the Wesleys, Francis Place, Shaftesbury, Bevin and Bevan – as well as mixing the acrid and the bland in a manner calculated to irritate those capable of it into thought.

History, then, and a finely sloping ap-

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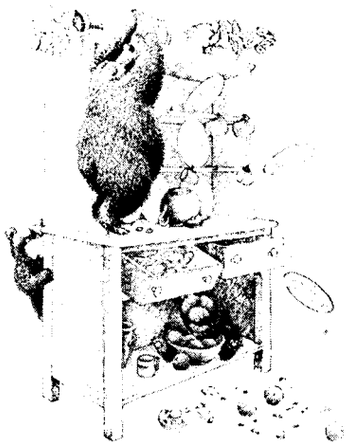
proach to it in Madeline Jones's *Stuart People* (£3.25), one of Batsford's 'People in Period' series. A quick, fact-packed intro leads into ten boiled-down biographies of 17th-century men and women who left pillageable memoirs or diaries. Courtier, Vicar, Yeoman, Merchant, Shoemaker, Politician (Halifax), Soldier, Surgeon: not quite beggarman, thief, but a fascinating group-portrait of an age. By indirections, find directions out. A pity that, much as it did in my Matric-years, the subject, History, leans still so heavily on the 19th century, British. There were events of import before. A couple of R. J. Unstead flatbacks (Black £2.75 and £1.45), *Egypt and Mesopotamia* and *Greece and Rome*, are there to make the point.

Back to the present day and a pair of sensible mind-benders. John Morrison's *The Media Men* (Batsford £3.25) is a super-canny piece of compression about the selective distortions practised by newspapers, TV and radio. No one is spared: we are as guilty as those East Europeans and Chinese. The only objection to this slim, crafty job lies in the fact of using the same illustration twice, several times. There is always another book on castles, and David Macaulay did one of the better ones back in November last year. Mercifully, he has since turned his copious talents to a long look at what goes on beneath our feet, the pipes and tunnels and eerie foundations of subterranean life. The marvellous brown-and-white line-drawings look surreal but are factual lessons in their own right. Anything that stirs interest in the commonplace unknown – and to this degree – is worth its weight in navvies: *Underground* (Collins £3.95).

Who knows what to know for a doubtful future? Education, by etymology, is a drawing-out. Whither is moot. A modicum of enthusiasm, since – as D. H. Lawrence said – we are doomed to live and had therefore better get on with it, is in order. But there is also a time for play. Full marks to the following for the sort of sprightly relaxation that should be around after tests on 'subjects'. Sid Sackson's *Penguin Colourgrams* (£1.25) are for people with patience, coloured pens and guile. Based vaguely on abstract artists like Klee and Mondrian, they seem to depend on who starts: or so my home panel insists. Bernard Myers's *Supermazes No 1* (Muller £1.75) are incredibly beguiling and wicked: the ghost of that upstairs-downstairs artist, Escher, haunts – you climb down to mount. A real, engaging silly is Jim Jam's *Pun Strips* (Muller £1.25), pictures and crossed-out letters revealing proverbs. Lovely, terminal lunacy comes in Eric Kenneway's *Folding Faces* (Paddington £2.50), where nimble fingers can do an origami of Nixon, Stalin, Hitler and Shakespeare, among others.



Robin and Jocelyn Wild
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Three little bears explore an empty house, bouncing on *three* beds, rummaging in *five* drawers and so on, making an enchantingly amusing counting book in story form. A delightful follow-up to *The Bears' ABC Book*.
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Penelope Lively
The Voyage of QV66
A dog, a horse, a cow, a pigeon, a kitten – and Stanley. The animals' adventures, narrated by Pal the dog, make a deliciously comic story as the crew of QV 66 journey across an England abandoned by people and covered with water in search of Stanley's identity. Line drawings by Harold Jones.
£3.10

Leon Garfield
Garfield's Apprentices
The Filthy Beast
The Enemy
Two more titles complete this dazzling series of novels in miniature, recreating with wit and brilliance the lives of young apprentices in 18th Century London. Line drawings by Faith Jaques.
£2.50 each

Heinemann Young Books

Alan Ryan

Filthy Beasts

Reading the books your children leave scattered about the house is a device for travelling in time more familiar even than Proust's sodden madeleine. It offers the same reassurances and consolations as less articulate activities, like dipping toast soldiers into the Sunday-morning boiled egg, confident at last that nobody will fuss if you drip yolk on your shirt. Reading the mildly didactic stories in the 'Long Ago Children Books' (Heinemann £2.50 each) is reassuring in a different way. Almost everyone is conscious that in the middle of casual conversation he can suddenly recall some isolated, useless piece of information – the date of the assassination of Alexander II, perhaps, or the fact that Charles II had a brave and glamorous cousin, Prince Rupert of the Rhine – and the phenomenon is apt to induce a certain despair. Did we once know all this stuff, but connectedly and to some end; or did we spend 15 years learning pointless fragments of information; does the memory really just collapse at the end of adolescence; will the rest of our lives be lived entirely on borrowed intellectual capital? Nothing of the sort, of course; what keep on surfacing are the scraps of information embedded in stories like those which appeal to fluent eight or ten-year-old readers.

And these stories – the most recent batch includes *The Claws of the Eagle* by Geoffrey Trease, *The Walls of Athens* by Jill Paton Walsh, *Desert Drum* by Ann Schlee, and *The Coal Train* by Penelope Farmer – are very well told, and illustrated with marvellous aptness. David Smee's illustrations to *The Walls of Athens* are particularly enjoyable; they are not exactly pastiche vase paintings, but they do capture that spikiness and the awkward perspective of sculpture in relief, while remaining perfectly intelligible to their intended reader. I twitched a bit at the idea of Penelope Farmer's story of a derailment in the winter of 1947 counting as a tale of *long* ago children. But both the story and the drawings certainly evoked memories of North London in a very cold and scruffy bit of its history.

Also from Heinemann at £2.50 are the two concluding books in Leon Garfield's *Apprentices* – *The Enemy* and *The Filthy Beast*. They are written with great panache, *The Enemy* especially so; and the illustrations by Faith Jacques do a very persuasive job of suggesting the extraordinary way in which 18th-century London juxtaposed classical elegance, openness and good order with medieval, cramped squalor. Mr Garfield is full of lines which sound as if they either began life or intended to end it in the stage of a working-class street theatre. Some of the best are given to Miss Linnet, who announces that 'Though I'm only a pie-maker's daughter, I'm wonderfully full of good things', and naturally responds to all flattery with the observation that 'Though I'm only a pie-maker's daughter, I'm not to be buttered up'.

Out from the world of fiction and into that of fantasy, Elisabeth Beresford atones for the ghastly Wombles with another of her Magic Books. *Secret Magic* (Hart-Davis £2.95) stars a scruffy, square-headed cat named Spinks – who is, evidently, not Spinks but a Sphinx, and therefore a dab-hand at time travel. He's also an efficient social worker, and his efforts here go to saving the market licence of an elderly vegetable seller, whose nephews are thus

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preserved from the perils of fostering. It's they, by the way, who encounter Prince Rupert of the Rhine, during 'the little fire of London'. They do warn him about the forthcoming Great Fire, but he just laughs it off – naturally, since otherwise they'd have had nothing to warn him about. It's a good romp, as is Michael Noonan's *The Invincible Mr Az* (Methuen £3.50). Az is an animal hypnotist, but Michael Noonan usually writes about the Flying Doctor, so the result is less in the way of furry friendliness than you'd expect, and more in the way of high-speed chases in launches with the villains being satisfactorily demolished by blue whales, combats between elephants and water cannons, and several more agreeably chaotic fights.

The winner, hands down, in the animal fantasy stakes is Penelope Lively's *The Voyage of QV66* (Heinemann £3.10), a book which few children are likely to get a look at before their parents have finished with it. QV66 – or to give its full name QV66 PROPERTY OF THE PORT OF LONDON RETURN TO DEPOT 3 – is a flat-bottomed barge in which Stanley, Offa, Pansy, Freda, Ned and Pal travel from Carlisle station to London Zoo.

What QV66 is doing at Carlisle station, and why its crew wish to get to London Zoo, you really need to read the book to appreciate – but you can begin to get the drift of it from the fact that Offa is a pigeon, Pansy a cat, Freda a cow, Ned a horse who suffers from outbreaks of believing that he's called Flying Warrior, and Pal a dog. England is covered in a gradually receding flood; the People have all gone away; and as for Stanley, he wants to go to London Zoo to find out what sort of creature he is, since there are none like him in the vicinity of Carlisle, and he has seen a picture of himself on a poster labelled 'London Zoo'. The observant reader will notice that he's small, furry, has a long tail, and feels an awkward, uneasy affinity with People; his style is not so much People as Woody Allen, with intermittent bouts of huge self-satisfaction alternating with equally vast self-disgust. He's also rather prone to have 'Ideas', which are disconcertingly like the central themes of the major religions of the world.

Less elaborately parent-catching volumes are the jumbo-sized Peanuts epics (Hodder & Stoughton £1.80), with such familiar titles as *Lucy Rules OK?* – anything but OK, since she puts the empress Catherine in the shade on all major counts, from emotional rapacity to military unscrupulousness.

Asterix and his mates crash their way through further adventures; it's a relief to see that *The Twelve Tasks of Asterix* (Hodder & Stoughton £2.40) is no better than the disappointing film of which it is the book, and is thoroughly shown up by *Asterix and the Cauldron* (now in limp covers, 95p). *Iter Gallicum* (£2.40) may inspire you to help your eldest with his Latin homework, or it may simply make you wonder where on earth you left your dictionary. It's at least a more respectable inducement to learn the dead tongues than what used to motivate my contemporaries – deciphering those bits of *The Lives of the Twelve Caesars* that our bowdlerised translation was too demure to render into English and too scrupulous to omit altogether. Asterix may rely on less elaborate grammar, but it's a more generally usable vocabulary.

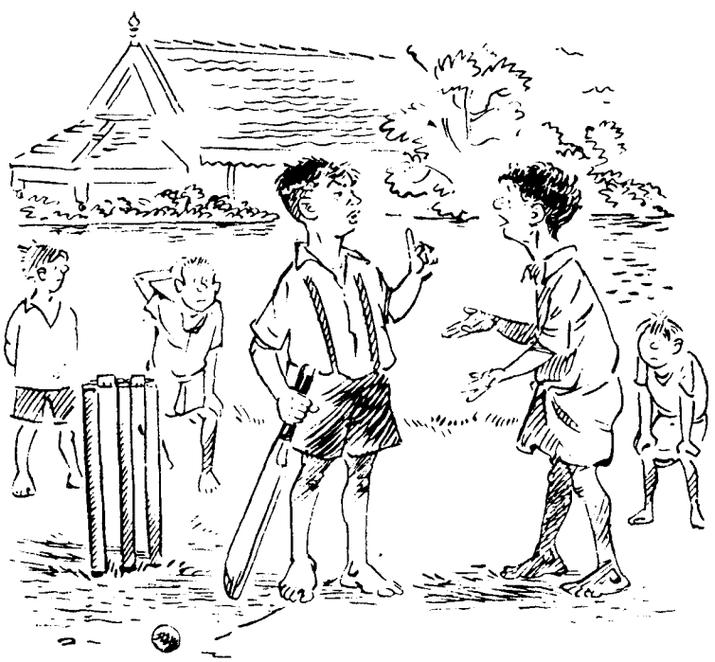
Jeremy Treglown

Bent Coins

Most people's fantasies are *really* fantastic, I suppose, like 'Perhaps tomorrow I'll get a Nobel Prize', or 'Will this be the day I discover I'm the rightful Earl of Grosvenor?' So it must be unnerving to be a children's author, with a genuine chance of the jackpot in every doodle – a potential Womble, a homuncular Mister Man, a future Flump in every throw. No wonder some publishers treat the market like an old fruit-machine, jamming in anything that looks remotely like cash.

Dud foreign coins are particularly common at the moment. Methuen have found a handful of small imitation Babars in a dull series (£1.50 and 60p) by Rodney Peppé about an elephant called Henry; and Mac-

New from Oxford



Swami and Friends
by R. K. Narayan
illustrated by R. K. Laxman

This classic story of the charming adventures of 10-year-old Swami in the India of 1930 has been described by Graham Greene as 'a book in ten thousand'. £2.95

River
illustrated in full colour
by Charles Keeping

Charles Keeping's beautiful pictures show the changes wrought on a basic landscape by the seasons and by the activity of man; but in the end, Nature can never wholly be eclipsed. £3.25

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by Frederick Grice

Leonard, on holiday in a lonely country mansion, finds his whole life is changed when he discovers the remains of a man-powered flying machine and a photograph showing that it really did once fly. £2.50

Hunt the Thimble
written and illustrated
by Fiona French

This full colour picture-book vividly evokes the atmosphere of 17th-century Amsterdam in describing the fun two children have searching for a hidden thimble. £2.50

Tomorrow is my Love
by Hal Summers

This collection contains a variety of poems on life in general which encourage children to really look at the world around them. £2.50

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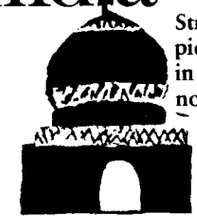
Striking black and white pictures by children born in the sub-continent but now living in Britain.
'A joy and an illumination' Guardian. £1.95

Adam & Charles Black

donald and Jane's are jamming up the cylinders with Ulf Löfgren's dull (£1.95) Albin. Australian cents are in there, too, disguised as propaganda for British Airways, in Kate Robertson's new series about a fat little aeroplane called Dilbert (Wayland £1.25), who travels the world, chats to other aeroplanes, etc. The model seems to be the Rev. W. Awdry's railway stories, and *Dilbert* is similarly painful to read aloud (endless dialect variations, irritating snobberies among the protagonists), but there's a strongish story-line in each, and our son (nearly five) likes them. More popular with him, though, is Ken Kirkwood and Ruth Thomson's new detective called Peabody (Dent £1.95) – a chase in each book, and you have to find clues, spot the villain, and so on, in the detail-packed pictures.

But no new characters come out anything like as attractively as Steve Augarde's Barnaby Shrew and Charlotte Firmin's Hannah. *Hannah's Great Decision* (Macmillan £3.25 – yes, sorry, £3.25) is about a little rich girl ('For as long as Hannah could remember her parents had been pop stars') who persuades her family to drop out into the country and open a chip-shop-cum-ice-cream-parlour. *Barnaby Shrew Goes to Sea* is even more distinctive (Deutsch £2.75), with its homicidal ship's crew ('this here's Great Big Harry. GBH for short') and volatile captain. Well illustrated and crisply written, it introduces Steve Augarde as someone who *deserves* the jackpot.

Althea has already hit it, of course, with her various informative books, particularly the excellent ones for the National Trust. Among her recent output is a group of little volumes on the seasons, for very young children (Souvenir £1.25) and the straightforwardly factual *Flying In An Aeroplane* (Evans £1.95). Better still in the mildly educational stakes is Robert Crowther's *The Most Amazing Hide-and-Seek Alphabet Book* (Kestrel/Viking £2.95). You pull a tab on each letter and an appropriate animal appears – a mouse nipping between one leg and the next of its *m*, a long snake uncoiling from behind its *s* and finally sticking its tongue out. Wonderful books like this don't last long in our house but, like clockwork cars in the sandpit and biscuits in the bath, they are expensively popular.

The other successes fall as usual into two main groups: books worth buying or giving as presents because they are very well illustrated, and books for getting from the library because they have good stories but don't necessarily take many readings. The members of our sample audience down here are on the whole impressively immune to Good Taste in the former category, though they are fans of Nicola Bayley and like the Scolar Press's inexpensive little facsimiles of early 19th-century books – *The History of Little Henry*, for example (which comes with separate stand-up cardboard cut-outs), and *Cinderella* – both 95p. Colin McNaughton's *The Rat Race* (Benn £2.25) is pastiche-Victorian in type-face, but otherwise an ordinary and enjoyable animal story. Charles Keeping's *River* (Oxford £3.25 – you heard) is a good-looking, if slightly precious wordless narrative about what the OUP calls 'the changes wrought on the scene by the seasons and by man's persistent attempts to impose himself on his surroundings'. Could be tried on children of dons at All Souls, maybe, accompanied by Pope's lines to Bathurst on the same theme in his Imitation of Horace's *Ep.* II.ii; but I should keep Kenneth Mahood's joky *Losing Willy* (Macmillan £2.95) close at hand in reserve. Philippe Dumas's pretty Parisian watercolours, on the other hand, illustrate Kay Fender's *Odette* (Gollancz £2.75) in a lively and unpretentious way. The story – about an old man who looks after a fledgling – ends with the main character's death, so start reading several hours early, to leave time for ensuing metaphysical discussion.

Of the library-type stories, Marlene Reidel's *Maxie's Mice* (Macmillan) (oh all right – £3.95) has some nicely aggressive rodents who run up robbers' trouser-legs, understandably frightening them away; and both Tamasin Cole's *The Dragon and George* and Max Velthuijs's *The Monster and the Robbers* (Black £2.50 each) are amusing adventures involving harmless dragons. John Cunliffe's latest, *Mr Gosling and the Runaway Chair* (Deutsch £2.95) is good lost-and-found narrative involving an antique shop and some off-stage domestic strife, and John Burningham continues the Shirley fantasy-life in *Time to get out of the bath, Shirley* (Cape £2.50).

Burningham's now classic *Borka* is one of the previously-published books now coming out in paperback (Puffin 60p). There are too many others to describe, but among them are Ezra Jack Keats's *Jennie's Hat* (Harper & Row 60p) and some other good Puffins, especially Jill McDonald's *Maggy Scraggle Loves the Beautiful Ice-Cream Man* (60p), Jonathon Coudrille's *Farmer Fisher* (50p) and Virginia Lee Burton's vintage *Mike Mulligan and his Steam Shovel* (60p).

Tim Hopkins

Matters of Form

Many fantasy books for younger children are too cosy and insubstantial to appeal to the adults charged with reading them. Not so Brian Patten's *The Elephant and the Flower* (Allen & Unwin £1.25): his jungle story, centring on the friendship of a miniature elephant and a walking flower, is richly inventive without being coy. The prose has the musical qualities one might expect from a writer better known for his poetry, and there is a gentle, ironic humour, as when the giraffe is questioned about the end of the world (which he alone can see): 'What lies there?' asked the elephant. 'Giraffes, of course,' answered the giraffe. This is an original book, whose charm is complemented by Meg Rutherford's exquisite illustrations.

Robert Graves was apparently challenged to write an 'interesting and funny story for children' – which may explain why *The Big Green Book* (Puffin 45p) is only a partial success. The story of a small boy living

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with his rather chilly aunt and uncle hinges on the finding of a green book full of magic spells.

> It told him how to make himself as old or as young as he liked, and how to change the look of things, and how to make birds or animals do just as he liked, and how to disappear.

There is little here that we haven't seen before, though Maurice Sendak's splendid illustrations just save the book from being ordinary.

Robert Nye's *Once Upon Three Times* (Benn £3.95) – his own versions of three folk tales – is compelling reading. His writing has a lightness of touch, an economy and pace; but more important still, he convinces us the stories are worth re-telling. 'Cricket' concerns the exploits of an illiterate farmer who leaves the land to become Criticus, the philosopher; by a hilarious series of coincidences, his true ignorance is never revealed. 'Mr and Mrs Vinegar' is equally amusing, with its eternal theme of witless husband and nagging wife. 'Aucassin and Nicolette' is a beautifully extended narrative on the oldest theme of all: two lovers whom fate has meanly contrived to keep apart.

I am not sure I understand the reasons for the reprinting of R. K. Narayan's *Swami and Friends* (Oxford £2.95). Set in south India, it is a curiously parochial and dated tale about a middle-class Indian boy with a distaste for school and a passion for cricket. But the language – which I can only describe as Hindinglish – is quite unappetising:

> Soon there was pandemonium: Sankar, Swaminathan, and the Pea rolling over, tearing, scratching, and kicking one another. The bell rang. Rajam, Somu and Mani entered. The teacher came in and stood aghast. He could do little more than look on and ejaculate.

P. J. Kavanagh's first book for children, *Scarf Jack* (Bodley Head £3.50) has a fine sense of time and place; and yet its theme is timeless and universal. Francis, the 15-year-old boy narrator, saves the eponymous hero from a band of hired assassins in the Gloucestershire of 1798. Scarf Jack's 'crime' is to have given help to the oppressed Catholic peasantry in Ireland. It is an excellent historical novel, quite suitable for older readers. Meanwhile *My Pal Spadger* (Dent/Dolphin 65p) is a simple, warm-hearted tale of working-class life in the Bolton of the Twenties. Bill Naughton tells of two boys – Bill (the narrator), and Spadger, his loveable, feckless friend. The loosely episodic material is modest and unambitious, but evokes an authentic picture of urban childhood, with which readers (particularly boys) will readily identify. If you're a teacher on the look-out for something to shake 4C out of their apathy, this might well be your book.

Dodie Smith's *The Midnight Kittens* (W. H. Allen £2.95) is a thoroughly professional tale with pace, unity and an energetic belief in itself. One's mild reservation is that it is not about real children – yet neither is it wholly a fantasy. This story of ten-year-old orphaned twins on a visit to their widowed grandmother takes place in that no-man's-land where children say 'Gosh', 'Oh pooh!' and 'Super'. Here is one snatch of dialogue involving our young hero and heroine:

> Tom said, 'Mike says the idea of Good's so hard to think about.'
>
> 'I know,' said Pam gloomily. 'I'm beginning to see it as a vague golden lump, a bit like butter. Terribly hard to hang on to.'
>
> 'Well butter would be,' said Tom.

Today's ten-year-olds?

In Rumer Godden's *The Rocking Horse Secret* (Macmillan £2.95) we are introduced to Tibby who lives with her widowed mother, a domestic for the eccentric Miss Pomeroy. Tibby is befriended by Jed, a handyman of gypsy descent. He, like Tibby and her mother, is threatened with eviction when Miss Pomeroy's twin nieces move in after the old lady's death. But the rocking-horse holds a secret – which I shall not divulge. A 'sensitive' account of the world of adults as seen through the eyes of an imaginative child, this book will appeal to girls in the seven to ten age-group.

Culotte the Donkey (Oxford £2.95) by Henri Bosco is a mystical tale of Constantin Gloriot's obsession with the beast with whom he is forbidden to associate. Even in translation, there is a heady sensuousness, endlessly elaborate descriptive passages and a self-conscious '*paysan*' religiosity. This is hardly a children's book at all (the sixth-form excluded). *Wild Ghost Chase* (Chatto £2.95) by D. J. Enright is witty and urbane, with puns, malapropisms and literary allusions at every turn. Three children of a harassed writer (whose wife is in Australia), seek excitement away from home; they find this in the unravelling of mysterious happenings involving ghouls and vampires. They are aided and abetted by three adult 'secret agents' who provide much of the book's humour. This tale is definitely one for the bright and literary child: Enright doesn't underestimate his readers. It's all a bit too clever and elusive for my taste – but a very polished job all the same.

In Nina Bawden's *Rebel on a Rock* (Gollancz £3.20), Jo, a 12-year-old, visits Ithaca – an island in the grip of a dictatorship – with her family. The story's outward tension derives from the efforts of hounded democrats to overthrow the government – heroic figures with whom Jo becomes unwittingly involved. The inner tension springs from the conflicts in Jo herself, a girl in that lonely wasteland between childhood and adulthood. The handsome, 14-year-old Alexis is the link between the two levels of the novel – a book which combines superlative storytelling with sensitive insights into a way a young adolescent girl sees herself and the world. This is children's literature of the highest quality.

Among this week's contributors:

E. J. Hobsbawm is Professor of Economics and Social History at Birkbeck College; his most recent work is *The Age of Capital: 1848-75.*

Eric Sams worked as a cryptanalyst in the Intelligence Corps, 1944-47.

Ian McEwan's novel, *The Cement Garden*, will be published this autumn by Cape.

Tim Hopkins's second football novel, *Jimmy Swift*, will be published by Macdonald & Jane's early next year.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

John Coleman

Show Trials

Opening Night (AA) *Screen on the Hill*
The Betsy (X) *London Pavilion; Odeon, Marble Arch*
A Piece of the Action (A) *Warner 3; ABCs Fulham and Edgware Roads*
The Stick-Up (A) *ABC, Shaftesbury Avenue*

John Cassavetes is a troubled, troublesome American talent (actor, writer, director), now and then flaring into absolute brilliance. He treats himself to lots of time to spare: ours. He also has a very gifted and beautiful wife, Gena Rowlands, who can act: her twitching, lost, well-meaning hausfrau in *A Woman Under the Influence* broke – rather as Brando did in *Streetcar* – through the two-dimensional confines of the cinema screen. She was almost too pained, too raw: she embarrassed for art. That, anyway, is one man's opinion. The way Cassavetes chooses to film, as also in *Faces* and *Husbands*, constantly puts him and his people at risk. There is Method and there is madness. His fictions sprawl, using spur-of-the-moment improvisations, letting the camera run where a more conventional creator would have cried halt. *Opening Night*, though it has all manner of side-benefits, is perhaps his corniest offer to date. Cassavetes has cast his missus as an actress, one Myrtle Gordon, somewhere in her forties and having a bitch of a time in New Haven running in a play destined for Broadway and called 'The Second Woman'. It does not appear to be a very good play in the first place (New Haven), has been written by one Sarah Goode (Joan Blondell, a lovely near-convincing appearance), causes Miss Rowlands all kinds of identity crises – 'I'm not going through menopause,' she says firmly, ridding us of that doubt – and seems very unlikely to open in the second place, New York. Myrtle goes missing, only to turn up comprehensively smashed at the last second. As she hits alternate walls on the way to her dressing-room ('I've seen a lot of drunks in my day, but I've never seen anybody as drunk as you and still able to walk,' says a baffled, admiring fellow-pro), we know she will make it.

Several interesting germs of ideas are active in this affair. A star-struck girl, after clawing at Myrtle's limousine-window in New Haven, is killed on the rainy street and comes back to haunt, a sort of earlier Myrtle. Miss Blondell, doing her damnedest, persuades Miss Rowlands to see a chic medium, unavailingly. Ben Gazzara, a Cassavetes faithful, directs the rummy-looking play, in which Cassavetes himself has a part – one Myrtle/Rowlands finally persuades him to re-write, as it were, on stage, to deeply implausible audience applause – and all ends with chaps like Peter Falk and Peter Bogdanovich rhubarbing at the triumphant party after. Some of the back-stage stuff is redolent of grease-paint and guts: Rowlands looks raddled and glamorous, sliding from one to the other with pained, practised ease; there is a splendid, quiet manifestation by Paul Stewart as the bedevilled producer. But this is Cassavetes having his cake and making a meal of it. That there is no business like show business we already know, often to our cost. The show must also go on. Does it have, though, to go on and on? And isn't Mr C. cheating it more than a bit in his own write by force-feeding us a dose of desperately unfunny 'improvisation' (to watch him and his wife mucking around with the play within the film is to cry a little, for all the canned laughter)? 'It's a tradition,' explains director-Gazzara somewhere: 'actresses get slapped.' Maybe the dubious proposal could be extended to their husbands, too.

The only question that might engage the reviewer regarding Daniel Petrie's *The Betsy*, a long nonsense extracted from a long nonsense by Harold Robbins, is what Lord Olivier is doing in it, beyond effortlessly acting everyone else off the screen. He is an automobile tycoon, Number One, pushing 90 and head of a ludicrous fictional enterprise that embraces homosexuality, incest, Mafia-connections and extremely expensive items of decor: mad mansions, titled Englishwomen with the hots, and other thespians like Robert Duvall, Katharine Ross, Joseph Wiseman *et* – for all I know – *al.*, behaving far too well for their context, which is mostly Detroit. There are good bad movies and bad good movies: opportunities for a giggle or a sigh. This is a bad, bad movie. I suppose, in search of where its 125 minutes went, one might come up with random lines. Lady Robina has her delicate come-on to the ex-racing-driver who is destined to take over Number One's empire: 'Let's just say I was a widow long before my husband died.' A gay is awarded the unhappy bonus – sweating over the telephone – of 'But can't we at least meet at your convenience?' The small fascination of putative entertainments like this has to lie in the sheer cost of mounting them. No doubt, any more, that one can pick up a degree not just of but in Cynicism across the pond.

Sidney Poitier probably shouldn't be accused so basely, but he does have a habit – since he turned actor-director – of making films that seem aimed at a black-white market and condescending to both shades. There is something for everyone in *A Piece of the Action* (though not in the Robbins sense): here, by contrast, the emphases rest rather on jolly robbers, ghetto adolescents, even real problems. But the outcome of a largely black-staffed movie, with good intentions, does seem to turn on income: not what the film will make at the box-office but the way it chooses to deploy money in its inspissated plot. Poitier and the fine Bill Cosby are gentle villains who find themselves blackmailed into caring for a bunch of black drop-outs at a community centre. While trying to suss out who has got them into this fix, they begin to bother about the prospective delinquents in their charge. Allow that there is some harsh language ('all you prissy-assed, middle-class niggers,' says an angry girl to a weeping teacher), but counter this with Poitier's cure: shelling out torn-in-half dollars against improved behaviour. Apart from a great deal of action, which lost me in its twists – there really appear to be three or four *kinds* of film uneasily cohabiting here – the central theme is rehabilitation, making things better, doing it (up to a point) the tough route. Alas, then, that travesties like *Guess Who's Coming to Sinner?* or *A Piece at Any Price* suggest themselves as alternative titles.

Jeffrey Bloom's *The Stick-Up*, peculiarly set in Devon, in 1935, in King George V's Jubilee year, stars David Soul. That is one way of putting it. A moment's thought, and it may be the only way of putting it. Soul, under a hat when he is not combing his hair, is an American, Duke Turnbeau, and some sort of crook. For reasons there would be little point in going into, he is soon on the road with one Rosie (Pamela McMyler), an actress with a disarmingly tousled face and an Irish accent. From then on, it's like a nightmare recollection of a poor man's version of a scrambled notion of – what? – *Bonnie and Clod*. Duke steals a cow and Rosie mud-wrestles for money. The rest is silage.

Sport

Russell Davies

Long Hops

The cricket season is, so to speak, 'upon us', though 'among us, somewhere' would be nearer the truth. It hasn't been easy to locate so far, except in the perfunctory thwack and drone of Sunday afternoons on BBC-2: 'In comes Dudgeon at number six . . . *Not* really his game, this . . . And he's bowled. Well, that was the typical Sunday stroke,' etc. If it's Jim Laker, he will add: 'Not a very good stroke *on behalf of* Dudgeon', just to top up the casual atmosphere.

Live cricket is a different matter, especially at Fenner's in Cambridge. Here on this 'delightful' ground (all cricket grounds are delightful, but this one has only one fairly unimportunate multi-storey car-park on its borders, plus a lot of trees and the straining spire of the Catholic church; then again, admission is free except for Benson & Hedges days and the Pakistan tour match): here on this delightful ground, then, bogus tension is impossible to whip up.

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One is always sure of the winner. No matter how the opposition may loaf and goof and experiment, the Young Gentlemen of the University will always submit to their experience and, occasionally, expertise.

Half of the Young Gents, it's true, haven't got their considerable minds on the job. Ten minutes after spooning some long-hop abstractedly into the regretful hands of mid-wicket, they can be seen mooching dejectedly in the shadow of the pavilion, pondering not their error but the ghastly bulk of the Tripos revision notes under their arms. The decision whether to set about actually reading these, or to sit about in the members' bar discussing New Zealand or Packer with visiting veterans and journalists, is one that must have, as the politicians say, 'far-reaching consequences'.

The current crop of YGs is quite an entertaining one, and it's particularly notable how much more confident than the rest the erstwhile heroes of the rugger field are. Fosh, Parker, Greig and, of course, Hignell in particular, all have a bit of the swagger that comes from the knowledge that they are Good at Sport, whatever the season; and Parker and Hignell even manage to maintain this cruising pose while encumbered by a bat. They each took a violent 60-odd off Leicestershire a couple of weeks ago – Leicestershire were not at full strength, but still had Ward, Shuttleworth and Birkenshaw bowling – so there was moderate glee among the white-knuckled pensioners clustering round the meat-pie warmer in the beer-tent (all of whom seemed to be on intimate terms with 'Paul' and 'Alistair'). But Leicester knocked off the 228 runs even more cheaply than expected, demolished the University for 90-odd, and won with plenty of time to spare for getting their sweaters in the wash.

Perhaps you would not expect much penetration from the YG's bowling – but it bothers me that the deficiency seems largely a question of action. What is worrying is that none of the YGs looks as though he is imitating anybody. They all have generalised actions, and nondescript bowling is the result. Greig, who has an exemplar in the family, lacks the length of limb that would permit even an approximate parody of the older Greig's plunging action (perhaps we should be thankful for that); while the others seem to have no heroes in mind. Indeed, how could they? As far as I can tell, there are no model actions to be seen in county cricket today, nor any whose idiosyncracies reproduce themselves with obvious profit in the variety of good balls bowled.

There used to be any number of emblematic approaches to the wicket: the Statham, all shakes, rattles and marvellous looseness; the Lindwall and the Trueman, where everything worked up so purposefully to the thump of the foot in the delivery stride; the Lock, where the rolled-down shirt-sleeves consciously exaggerated the confusing whirly style; the Laker, where the hop just before delivery seemed to give the bowler extra time to decide where the ball would go (thus increasing the apprehension of the batsman). Today, about the best they would find in the fast category locally would be the Daniel and the Roberts, both requiring untold beef, and the Willis, which is full of flailing inadvisabilities, and in the slow section, Illingworth's post-Laker hop and the wispy, academic carefulness of Birkenshaw and Pocock. Since imitation in cricket is the sincerest form of wishing to do well, no wonder the Young Gentlemen bowlers look like batsmen filling in.

Television

Julian Barnes

Getting Enough

Do you get enough sex on your television? When did you last see a flash of the *verboten*? Can you remember the last time your screen stirred you? I doubt it. I've always found it amazing, given the high level of prospective, actual and retrospective interest in carnality among the population at large, and given the competitive nature of our two main channels, that there isn't far more sex to be had from the tube. On the other hand, it's not in the least amazing that William Whitelaw, bedding down fatly with Mary Whitehouse at Saturday's NVLA conference in Birmingham, chose to picture the average viewer as a cowering wreck pegged out beneath the exit of the Cloaca Maxima. Where on earth can Whitelaw watch television – at the Hotel Megura Emperor in Tokyo? He used, of course, to be thought a liberal and a softy; recently, though, his *Weekend World* interview cleared up his views on race. Perhaps there's some connection here with his weekend comments on sex and bad language on the box. After all, if Indian television is as erotically inexplicit as Indian cinema, then no wonder the locals want to come to Britain: it's not, Whitelaw has spotted, the welfare benefits they've heard about, it's the Dennis Potter plays.

Alerted by the Deputy Leader, I spent last weekend on the lookout for filth and bad language. Saturday was a write-off: bloody football most of the time, bleeding Rugby League as well, plus a load of effing classical music. *Network – By Packhorse Through Lakeland* (BBC-2), *Sale of the Century* (Anglia), *The South Bank Show* (LWT) – I ask you, what a mother of an evening. The only time I caught the word 'sexual' was on the lips of that pornographer Leonard Bernstein, describing Stravinsky's *Les Noces* in *Dance Month* (BBC-2) as 20 minutes of solid sexual pulsing. You might argue that the work is, after all, the celebration of a marriage; but let me remind you of Whitelaw's words: 'Even the depiction of sexual activity that is perfectly legitimate and desirable in private may well be undesirable and offensive when displayed casually on the television screen.' We name the guilty parties: Martha Argerich, Homero Francesch, Cyprien Katsaris and Krystian Zimerman (pianos), plus the whole of the London Percussion Ensemble.

On Sunday things picked up. In *Reach for the Sky* (LWT) – two hours of knotted gooseflesh and scared thighs – Kenneth More's Douglas Bader spoke of 'making love' to a girl (even if he didn't mean *that*); there was two fifths of a beach-cradled breast in the Leeds Permanent Building Society ad ('Say the Leeds and you're smiling'); and some *National Geographic* shots in *The World About Us* (BBC-2). Pinter's *Night School* (Yorkshire), though, was hot stuff. The naïve viewer probably thought it a finely weighted, menacing and funny play in which every character seems to lie even when he's telling the truth, and in which Ian Holm's whiningly aggressive Walter was outstanding; he probably also enjoyed Sydney Tafler, fresh from fixing the legs on Douglas Bader, boasting along as Mr Salto ('You're a terrible forger . . . I'm a better forger than you and I don't forge'). But the Deputy Leader would surely have noticed that Holm fellow (deceptively fully-dressed) getting on to a bed with a girl for almost five seconds. They weren't married, and it's clear Holm was not contemplating a 'perfectly legitimate and desirable' act. Thank God the distinguished executive producer Peter Willes is retiring soon.

The truth is, of course, that on the rare occasions when sex crops up on the box, it's treated with near-stifling seriousness and concern – as in *Man and Woman* (Yorkshire) – and is billed as a problem rather than a subversively inviting celebration. In this guise it lurked through *Cross Question* (BBC-1) and surfaced like a blowing whale in Bernard Williams's spoil-your-Sunday-night-sleep show, *Dilemmas* (BBC-1). This week the Professor asked a mixed though atypical sample – uxorious husband, philanderer, intellectual lesbian, and beringed, trendily faithless couple – the question, 'How Important is Sex?' Their views could be conflated without loss into one word – *very* – and were largely ignored by Williams's studio experts: a smug hardline Freudian, the incongruously humane Dr Wendy Greengross, and the Director of the Festival of Light, who instructed us that pre-marital sex led to 'a diminishing of human potential'.

Still, even he would permit a little married how's-your-father. In revolutionary Cambodia, marriages have to be approved by party committees, and the lucky couples get a whole week together before being sent their separate ways. If they try to see each other again, *Panorama* (BBC-1) explained, they are punished. In Cambodia, punishment is quite simple: you get killed. This explains why there are no prisons in the country, and fewer people than before. Prime Minister Pol Pot, smiling plumply like any other tyrant happy with his power, described a future society of 'happiness, progress and equality'. They've already achieved the last: everyone has an equal share of nothing. No more towns, shops, money, higher education, theatres or cinemas; ten-year-old children crew the ships. The US may have tried to bomb bits of Cambodia back into the Stone Age; there are, Pot can tell them, quicker and more effective ways.

His vicious and empty society has abolished both books and writers. Ronald Harwood, of course, has also had his spells of Khmer Rouge activity during his first series of *Read All About It* (BBC-1); so

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it's gratifying to note that this column's reminders about the people he chooses are beginning to have their effect. In his final show, both the guest writers, one couldn't help remarking, had written books; and not only that, but the three panellists had each, individually and separately, also written books. A notable and pleasing breakthrough.

Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

Tuition Fees

Vieux Carré *Nottingham Playhouse*
A Woman of No Importance *Chichester*
The Glad Hand *Royal Court*
Alice's Boys *Savoy*

Tennessee Williams's memoirs have little to say about the months he spent as a young buck in the French quarter of New Orleans; and so it is hard to know how much of his *Vieux Carré* is directly autobiographical. Maybe he was seduced by a wild-eyed consumptive named Nightingale. Maybe he deliberately listened at the door of the room shared by a drunken strip-show barker and his sexual slave, a demure miss from upper-crust New York. Maybe he watched his landlady pour boiling water through the floorboards on to what she supposed to be an orgy in the basement below, and maybe the local gossips entertained him with the tale of the night-club princess who was devoured by rampaging dogs. At any rate, a character described in the programme only as 'the Writer' steps in and out of these memories, re-living and reassessing them in much the same style as the protagonist of *The Glass Menagerie*. 'God was I ignorant when I came here,' he concludes, 'I ought to pay you all for tuition.'

The play is about growing up, but growing up in a pretty idiosyncratic way. It is about discovering that the world consists of Tennessee Williams people and Tennessee Williams situations, the embryonic data for a dozen Tennessee Williams plays. These characters don't make things happen. Things happen to them, mostly as a result of itches, aches and glandular longings over which they have pitiably little control. Nightingale is half-crazed with loneliness and fretful homosexuality. Hunger drives Miss Carrie and Miss Maude, two derelict maiden ladies who maintain the affectation of gentility even when they are circling the household gumbo like tattered old crows. But the saddest case of terminal obsession is that of Jane, the girl from New York, who can do nothing to resist a liaison she fully recognises to be rotting her beyond repair. 'I have been betrayed by a sensual streak in my nature,' she primly wails, just before submitting to something very like rape. It is a slogan that could be emblazoned in blood and sperm beneath the rusty hypodermics, the thousand-times-magnified VD bacteria, the suppurating anal rings and all the other lovable items to be found on the crest of Tennessee Williams.

His compassion for his walking wounded has tended to become a bit woozy and maudlin of late, so it is nice to be able to report that the chronological distance, combined with the detachment he has programmed into the play's structure, brings its rewards. For Williams, this is a hard-nosed, tough-minded piece, full of sour laughter and measured pain, demanding a cool, acerbic production and getting it from director and designer at Nottingham. Voytek's languidly spinning set consists of ugly splinters of hall, kitchen and bedroom walls, its top half-covered with a dust-sheet and its sides framed by fragments of wrought-iron balcony; and, logically enough, Keith Hack peoples it with animate images of dilapidation and decay, such as Ian McDiarmid's feverish Nightingale, Sheila Gish's ringingly aghast Jane and, especially, the ebulliently malevolent landlady pieced together by Sylvia Miles. I'm not sure Miss Miles quite negotiates the asked-for transition to frustrated mother, cradling Karl Johnson's weedy 'writer' in the mistaken belief he's her long-lost son; but her parlour Medusa is always plausible, whether she's hissing 'quit that loud fornication' through an offending keyhole, or bawling triumphantly at the scalded revellers as they scramble naked into the street, or simply slouching, red-faced, frizzy-haired and carpet-slippered through her bug-ridden domains. Whether Tennessee Williams remembered her or imagined her, she is one of his more original efforts; and finely played, too.

The Importance of Being Earnest always excepted, Oscar Wilde's drawing-room comedies are hypocritical confections, gummily pi in their affected approval for each and every of the seven deadly virtues, from civic duty to marital fidelity; and *A Woman of No Importance* is particularly sanctimonious with its categories. The goats are witty, cynical, urbane, stylish, everything Oscar liked to be, and the sheep are severe prigs, representing everything he was at pains to flout. Pity poor Gayle Hunnicutt, who is doomed to pass off a moral bully, busybody and peeping Thomasina as an all-white heroine. Pity Sian Phillips, who must convince us that a lifetime of atonement for one girlish indiscretion is a lifetime wisely spent. They play the two parts resiliently enough, but the parts are unactable – and so, perhaps, is the play as a whole. After all, a contemporary audience's pubic hair isn't likely to bristle with prurient indignation at the idea of virginity sacrificed or matrimonial law abused. Nevertheless . . .

Nevertheless, there's something about the play that rings truer than the more sophisticated sermonising of *An Ideal Husband* or *Lady Windermere's Fan*. If Wilde can't win us over to his 'good' characters, he does often manage to alienate us from his 'bad' ones, exposing their coolness as contempt and their levity as callousness. Keith Baxter's Lord Illingworth isn't just a narcissistic spinner of epigrams: he's a heartless loafer, capable of shrugging off the girl he promised to marry, impregnated, and then abandoned, as 'the prettiest of playthings', 'the most fascinating of small romances' and, of course, 'a woman of no importance'. Perhaps I have been taken in by yet another of Wilde's poses; but what I detect in the play, and in Patrick Garland's production, is the residual outrage of the Irish outsider at the English flippancy and blandness that had already all but absorbed him. In spite of the melodrama, the sentimentality, the attitudinising and pulpitry, there's disgust somewhere here, and perhaps self-disgust too.

My mind being irredeemably linear, I am probably the last person who should judge *The Glad Hand*, which is set on a ship commanded by a fascist occultist from South Africa and steaming towards the Bermuda Triangle, where the crew will somehow time-warp back to a cowboy strike in the Wyoming of 1886, there to shoot it out with the Anti-Christ. If you aren't following me, don't worry, because I'm not following myself. It all comes from the rococo imagination of Snoo Wilson, and, though it adds up to nothing much more than entertaining confusion, it contains some nice vignettes, notably from Anthony Sher, inside whose shaved and scrubbed skull creatures from Revelations are stomping about in jackboots. Maybe that's the way it feels to be John Vorster. Incidentally, Mr Wilson's deliberate absurdities don't begin to match the ones unwittingly perpetrated by Jonathan Hales and Felicity Browne, respectively sire and dam of the misbegotten *Alice's Boys*. Ralph Richardson, God help him, is onstage, exuding absent-minded malice as the chief of MI6, but never for a moment persuading us that this is how that arcane organisation would perpetrate, investigate or solve its beastlinesses.

Music

Andrew Clements

The Long March

Nono *Festival Hall/ Radio 3*

Claudio Abbado takes over as principal conductor of the LSO in September 1979. It's a heartening prospect, not least because it guarantees the chance that London's finest orchestra will at last get to grips with its fair share of contemporary music. Whatever the virtues of André Previn's tenure, they haven't included a detectable awareness of any 20th-century repertoire that makes other than traditional demands of its audience. Abbado's promotion of the European avant garde is well established, even if up to now it has been confined chiefly to his work in Italy. There it goes hand in hand with his commitment to radical politics, and it remains to be seen how much of this he feels able to transfer to London's stagnating, bourgeois musical life. Abbado has at least promised the opportunity to hear more of the music of his friend and political *confrère* Luigi Nono, and gave us a foretaste with the British premiere of *Como una ola de fuerza y luz*.

In Britain, Nono has been curiously ne-

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glected – *Como una ola*, a very substantial work, has waited six years to be heard, although a recording (DG 2530 436) has been available for some time. Born in 1924, he belongs with the Darmstadt school of the early Fifties, though his music has been less compromised and remains less compromising than that of any of his contemporaries. He has always retained serial techniques and the political content of his work has always been explicit. Composers who have undergone marxist conversions later in life have inevitably been forced either (like Hans Werner Henze) to adulterate their already fully-formed styles by incorporating elements that are more accessible, or (like the younger English and American leftists) to abandon 'advanced' music altogether in favour of a vernacular that is undemanding and frankly diatonic. Nono has had to make neither of these concessions. His music remains advanced in the sense that its procedures are complex and the forces it employs are those of high art, even if it occasionally incorporates revolutionary slogans and songs. Its impact is greater and its message more potent than any.

Como una ola de fuerza y luz was a good introduction to Nono. Essentially it's a piece for piano and orchestra with a taped background. But the structure is programmatic, the programme made explicit by the addition of a very beautiful soprano invocation which opens the work and dedicates it to the memory of Luciano Cruz, a young Chilean revolutionary killed in an accident in 1971. The remaining three sections then set out to evoke and affirm Cruz's presence. Nearly all Nono's work since 1960 has included electronics, and his experience of studio techniques now clearly informs his instrumental writing. The orchestra is employed in huge blocks of sound, shifting by quarter tones; the tape mirrors and complements these complexes in electronic terms. The ambiguities this sets up also carry over into the piano and soprano parts. In a work written for Maurizio Pollini, the apparent disregard for his extraordinary abilities may seem perverse – the piano writing is confined to the lowest registers, deliberately undemonstrative, chiefly groups of stuttering block chords. But Pollini's technique is in a sense built into the fabric of the music – the starting-point for those sections of the tape that complement the piano was a thorough exploration of his capabilities. Similarly the soprano who sang the first performance was used on the tape. The total effect is a web of cross-references between the live music of the soloists and their taped and altered counterparts while the background also moves between orchestra and tape.

In performance the impact is immediate and monumental. The focus becomes a third section, a 'long march' which begins in the depths of the orchestra and slowly moves to its highest pitches; the piano joins in while the music is moving through its pitch area. In the final section orchestra, tape and soloists then 'explode together in the certainty of [Cruz's] presence'. Performances were excellent, particularly from Jane Manning taking the soprano part. The audience, assembled mainly one suspects for the performance of Mahler's Fourth Symphony in the second half (very good it was too, further proof that Abbado conducts Mahler better than anyone else), was enthusiastic. If he manages to include other new works of such immediacy in his programmes, Abbado may yet succeed in doing something for new orchestral music in London.

Radio

Peter Porter

Better Pictures

Programmes devoted to writers have been to the fore on radio recently. As usual their heroes met with mixed fortunes. Stendhal and Mandelstam were well treated but Siegfried Sassoon came out of it badly, as did Bunyan. Samuel Johnson, Edward Thomas and Pushkin were elegantly discussed, and Freud strongly remembered. Among the poets whose works were aired were Blake, given an engaging but eccentric rendering by Sir Ralph Richardson, and Tennyson and Kipling, read dramatically by John Sparrow. Shaw has two encounters to come: one with his prizefighter friends and the other with an abbess who was his disputant and correspondent in old age. I list only the programmes I heard or will listen to, but it is still an impressive count for a medium sometimes accused of neglecting serious literature.

Programmes about writers have to fit such existing slots as the dramatised biography and the interval talk. Strangely, painters seem to excite our commentators more than writers do. This is being shown by the excellent series *Paintings in Close-Up* (Radio 3). Veronese, Poussin and Delacroix, in particular, have been most lucidly revealed. Talking about a painting can have the excitement of a piece of detective work, as when Richard Cocke told us that the large Veronese in the National Gallery, *The Family of Darius before Alexander*, can be traced back to the Pisani Family in Venice, and went on to sketch the career of a great-uncle of the first reported owner, and to make a very convincing case for the painting's structure and imagery being Veronese's tribute to this particular Venetian warrior. Sir Anthony Blunt was eloquent in his explanation of the peculiarities of Poussin's two Phocian pictures, as was Anita Brookner in her identification of Delacroix with his own depiction of Ovid among the Scythians. Radio's old self-congratulating joke against television, that you get a better picture, becomes a memorable paradox when paintings are being talked about. Television did a good job recently with Courbet (though you needed to keep adjusting the colour knob), but at the end little was left to remember him by – certainly nothing verbal. The *Paintings in Close-Up* broadcasts make you eager to seek out the pictures, if you don't know them already, and, as the series is devoted to works in British galleries, this isn't hard to do.

Back with my writers, I have to give top marks to Michael Bakewell's *A Disease of the Heart* (Radio 3), a portrait of Stendhal, made up of his writings about love and some of the realities of his affairs, as recorded by himself and others. Auden once compared Stendhal to Boswell, preferring Boswell's dramatic self-deception to Stendhal's chilly truth-telling. All professional confessors lie, he wrote. However, Bakewell's programme was so cunningly compiled and the juxtaposition of the young man's infatuation with his older self's cold presentation of the facts was so interesting that I ended up almost liking the lonely middle-aged writer, still thinking he was in love and still self-infatuated in his provincial exile in Civitavecchia. Simple techniques succeed in radio, as when the reminiscing voice says jokily, 'I'm going to make an attempt on a little Jewish singer', answering itself ruefully, 'and I almost made a mess of that'. His pursuit of a lady on a long walk as far as her vegetable garden was a flop, but it became Julien Sorel's success with Madame de Renal in *Le Rouge et le Noir*. Beyle's loss was Stendhal's gain. The programme was punctuated by martial music to illustrate the military stratagems of loving and to echo Stendhal's career as a Napoleonic camp-follower. Even the more sententious of his aphorisms were softened by being heard within the context of his often ridiculous exploits. In the end, he was only a small-scale campaigner, like most literary men. Metternich opposed his appointment as consul in Trieste and we heard the last of him among the lumpish citizens of Civitavecchia: 'I spend my evenings looking at the sea and regretting that I haven't got a pretty wife.' Ovid was not more cruelly exiled.

Sassoon's and Bunyan's pilgrimages were much more flatly done. Radio 3's account of Siegfried Sassoon's long haul into the Catholic Church was interspersed with early war poems and biographical detail, but I was much put off by that special unction which attaches itself to Catholic joy at the arrival of a famous man within the ranks of the faithful. The Bunyan programme on Radio 4 was burdened with the title, *The Milk and Honey is Beyond this Paradise*. It was a very straightforward and unilluminating account of his life, with plentiful extracts from his writings, which were intoned rather than spoken. We had a fine radio presentation of *A Pilgrim's Progress* recently, and the faults of this production seemed enlarged. Radio 4 also repeated its condensed version of Nadezhda Mandelstam's *Hope Against Hope*. This was a tactful adaptation which let the appalling story speak for itself. Among the many horrors of Osip Mandelstam's martyrdom, nothing was more telling than the instances offered of the parochialism of tyranny. We heard Pasternak in his Moscow flat answering the telephone and being told that Comrade Stalin in the Kremlin would like to speak to him. What followed might have been a talk between parish councillors in dispute about the rector, except that you knew how it ended – in humiliation and murder.

I heard two plays, both beautifully done on Radio 3. Albee's *A Delicate Balance* is an undoubted masterpiece and Wolfgang Kohlhaase's *The Grünstein Variation* may

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be as well. Kohlhaase's play is neither allegorical nor realistic, but more a meeting-place for voices. It suits radio perfectly and Peter Vaughan's performance as Lodek could not have been bettered. Edward Albee also writes marvellously well for radio and the two-and-a-quarter hours of *A Delicate Balance* seemed not a second too long. I put Albee far above Beckett as a writer of poetic dialogue, and this is his most terrifying account of the invasion of a prosperous middle-class home by that unknowable plague of despair which brings with it depression and death.

Weekend Competition

No 2515 **Set by B. Mooring**

Whatever they may feel like, Shakespeare's Histories don't actually cover all the history Shakespeare knew. So could we have 200 priceless words from those lost masterpieces *Edward the Confessor Part One, Canute, King Alfred,* etc. By 2 June.

Result of No 2512 **Set by E. O. Parrott**

We asked for extracts of prose or verse using only four-letter words; except that you weren't allowed to use any of *those* ones.

Report **by Dan Drough**

As with all the tricky comps we set, there were lots of entries about how tricky a comp this was, and about how Martin Fagg would handle it (well, he is our most regular four-letter winner): 'Fagg will cope,/Fagg will have some neat/Sure-fire idea, some feat/That will earn four quid' wrote Joyce Johnson enviously. One quid to her, seven to the ingenious Peterson, five the field, and a snappish three to the cheeky Hopkins.

When they were gone, Conn laid down once more five door mats. Mell eyed her: 'Want more, dost thee, Lady Chat.? Much more?' Conn nods, ever more free with love than talk. 'Rest thee, then,' Mell says. Conn lies down: then Mell, next Conn. 'Ease them down, love,' Mell says. 'Like that?' Conn asks. 'Fine,' says Mell. 'Just fine.' Then long they toil, turn, rage. 'Fast! Fast!' Conn sobs. 'Slow, slow!' says Mell. 'Easy, lass, easy!' Down, down, true pair, into deep dark they slip. Gasp, pant. Lose mind, soul, self. 'Push hard!' says Conn. 'Buck then, lass, buck!' says Mell. Then from avid loin flew fire: womb sang, made warm with love. Legs open, they rest; then, like twin fish, swim back. Wake, stir. 'Roll over, lass,' Mell says. 'Must fill thee thus, also.' Soon, soon, Conn felt that dark, wild, hard male Will sink deep: then drum. 'Thus, only thus!' they sigh. PETER PETERSON

When Vera fled with Eric, Carl wept. Such hard luck hurt like hell. Self-pity came. Hope died. Life lost much élan. Four kids were left – Olaf, Nora, Dick, Enid – whom papa must rear. Week upon week, Carl made food, kept home tidy, held away want. Then pals rang. Many gave help. Soon Carl felt once more that life held hope. More than that, Rita drew near: tall, sexy, kind, very into Punk. They both knew that each felt true love. Time went fast. Kids left home. With each year love grew like some tall tree, till Carl came upon Rita with Paul. Then evil took over from good. Sick with rage, Carl lost cool nous. Bang! Rita died. Bang! Paul also fell. Carl then felt free. What does this tale show? Into each life some rain must fall. BASIL RANSOME

Shun love, wise maid, lest love turn into hate;
When joys leap high, what long dark fall must wait!
Gaze over some fair pool, your eyes will miss
That weed deep down – mean love acts just like this.
Soft lure, base wile, sour trap – list arts more grim,
Each fits this vile name, love; they sink that swim.
When Eros' evil dart aims true, folk reel;
Once made, that open sore what balm will heal?
Play ball with love, alas, love wins that game;
Pipe, love will call your tune, your wild note tame.
Free, love will bind your feet; pray, then, poor fool,
Whom fire, when felt, must burn – take heed, keep cool.
Mark well this gate: pass here, love asks full toll . . .
You'd risk your body? Love will have your soul.
MOYRA BLYTH

Busy with cars, this huge high road
Goes slow, then fast with many hops:
Long keep them safe from harm, kind cops,
Help over here each tiny toad.
Ugly they seem – ugly like work
Some poet says (damn-fool idea!)
That Avon bard knew that they peer
From eyes like gems ('Fair uses lurk
When life gets sour') What more? we've read
That foul bent hags lick soup . . . vile fare!
Such food will make cats sick, that ne'er
Felt pang when poor dumb fish were dead.
Then come, join paws, loud laud that code
That lets them pass – thus long live toad!
MARTIN FAGG

Come into yard, Maud,
Wait near gate,
Come into yard, Maud,
Meet your fate.
Lips like wine,
Baby mine.

Grey dawn soon,
Bats have fled,
Exit moon,
Salt tear shed.
Come, fair maid –
Ever been laid?
STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

Stop train! Slow hiss.
'Take that!' 'Take this!'
'Take cash!' 'Let's hide!'
'Dear, dear! Chap died!'
Hide cash. Cops leap.
'Jump, lads . . .' Safe keep!
'We're done.' Then jail.
Long time. Look pale.
Ron's gone. Good life.
Fuzz hunt. Find wife.
Ron's fine. Gets tart.
'Nuts, cops!' (That fart!)
Pass time. We're free.
Find cash near tree.
Make film, make gold.
Tell tale; all's sold.
More gold. More said.
We're rich till dead.
WAYNE SIDESADDLE

Girl, grab rose buds when thou will.
Time flies fast. Over that hill
Urns wait. Life says down your fill,
Girl, don't idle – take your pill.
FRANK JEFFERY

Ther once wass this lady from Tyre,
Whoo fild evry mann with dees sire;
Tenn quid wass enuf,
Forr your back seat stuf –
Butt fees forr onne nite were much hyer.
TIM HOPKINS

Tony Miles

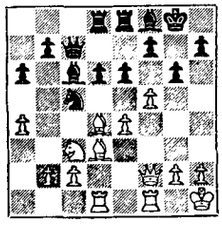
Chess

Column No. 84 **The Caro-Kann Defence**

The Caro-Kann long had the reputation of being an extremely solid defence, and as such has found favour with several past world champions, notably Botvinnik and Petrosian. More recently its appeal seems to have widened and most leading players include it in their repertoires. Karpov, for instance, used it several times in his match with Spassky.

In the last few months however, whites have been scoring highly with one particular line. The variation in question was (unfortunately) first seen in my game v. Mecking at Wijk-aan-Zee: – **1. P-K4, P-QB3; 2. P-Q4, P-Q4; 3. N-QB3, P x P; 4. N x P, QN-Q2; 5. N-KB3, KN-B3; 6. N x Nch, N x N; 7. N-K5!** (Now probably best is 7. . . .B-K3 followed by P-KN3 and B-N2. Also possible is 7. . . .N-Q2 as in Larsen-Rogoff, Lone Pine 78 – see my column NS 28 April but 7. . . .B-B4 seemed normal and perfectly natural so I played it without much thought.) **7. . . .B-B4?; 8. P-QB3!,** (A finesse, more accurate than 8. B-QB4 as will become apparent. The threat is Q-N3, so black has little choice. **8. . . .P-K3; 9. P-KN4!, B-N3; 10. P-KR4.** The point is that black cannot salvage his bishop via K5-Q4 because of P-QB4. Had white played 8. B-QB4 black would have 10. . . .N-Q2 with a satisfactory position. Since I did not like the look of 10. . . . P-KR4 I now tried **10. . . . B-Q3** (but after) **11. Q-K2!, B x N; 12. P x B, Q-Q4; 13. R-R3** I lost a piece for very little compensation.

Two months later the Czech GM Hort, blissfully ignorant of the above game walked straight into the same line against Karpov (who was slightly better informed) at Bugojno. He 'improved' with **10. . . .P-KR4** and the game continued: **11. P-N5, N-Q4; 12. N x B, P x N; 13. Q-B2!, K-B2; 14. R-R3!, N-K2** (The only move) **15. B-QB4, N-B4; 16. R-B3, Q-Q2; 17. R x Nch!** (A simple positional exchange sacrifice leaving black's pieces completely uncoordinated.) **17. . . . P x R; 18. Q x Pch, K-K2; 19. Q-K4, R-K1; 20. B-B4** (white quietly completes his development.) **20. . . .K-Q1; 21. Q-K5! R-KN1; 22. 0-0-0, P-KN3; 23. R-K1, B-N2; 24. Q-N8ch, K-K2** (Or 24. . . . Q-B1; 25. Q x RP wins easily.) **25. R x Pch! Resigns,** since 25. . . . Q x R; 26. Q-B7ch, Q-Q2; 27. B-Q6 is a beautiful mate.



Problem No 84
White to play. How should the game go? Answers to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked not later than 31 May.

Solution 82
1. K-N2 draws. If 1; R-B6; 2. R-B1 or 1 . . . R-Q7ch; 2. K-N3, R-K7; 3. R-KR1! RxP 4. R-R6ch and white gives perpetual check on the R-file forcing either the exchange of rooks or black to capture the rook giving stalemate.

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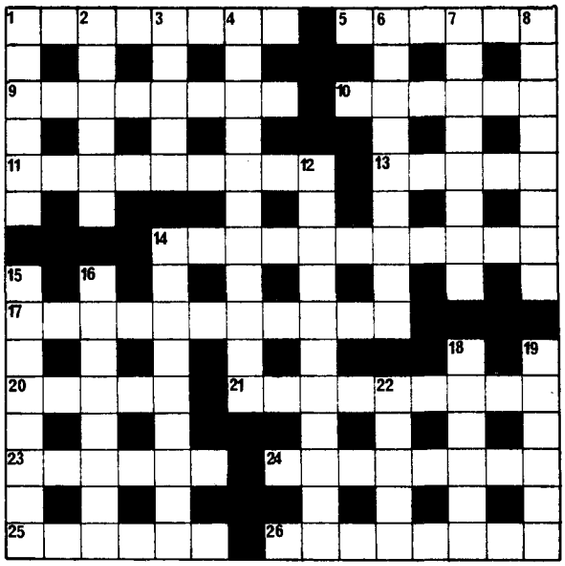
Weekend Crossword 1263

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1263, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 30 May.



ACROSS

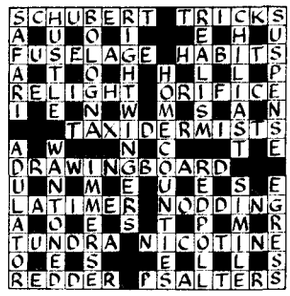
1. Cut off or put in a fellow (8).
5. It is Portal's turn to do a tour of duty (6).
9. The deficit in fuel is enormous (8).
10. Motorists about to throw a queen (6).
11. Legal profession tortured and jeered at (9).
13. Mrs Winkle's maiden name (5).
14. Louis has to get up and have a good feast (11).
17. Erroneously packs stolen climbing equipment (11).
20. 'I am ———, I contain multitudes' (Whitman) (5).
21. Proverbial of insecurity, but it makes mother love pure (9).
23. Composer who would become a deity if the international organisation ceased to exist (6).
24. The beloved finish in a corny way? (8).
25. Censorship of an article in Greek? (6).
26. Appreciates women who are fools? (8).

DOWN

1. Laurel from the east (6).
2. Mean to give a friend a go (6).
3. Give advantage up for a girl (5).
4. Discovered without legal action when dressed for training (11).
6. Stars with girls in bars (9).
7. Rose awkwardly with an instrument, but showing determination (8).
8. Getting to know a girl Anne replaced (8).
12. Bodies of men which are free from care? (11).
14. Possibly not in same state (9).
15. It is illuminating, but would be an insult if it lacked gravity (8).
16. Opening which makes a mimic potentially truer (8).
18. Masculine skills needed in a football team (6).
19. Poles give backing to a fellow in deep water (6).
22. Island of secret enemies (5).

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1261



Prizewinners to No 1261

A. Niederhoffer (Nassau)
Mrs K. Macintyre (London SW4)
H. Pashley (Weston s. Mare)

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LEEDS, extrovert, untidy female Geordie, 40, teacher, seeks attachment caring, intelligent man, interested duplicate bridge, theatre, dining, dancing. Box 1452.

ELEGANT WIDOW of professional man, 50, wants talk-partner of similar age, who is a widower & pref. a gourmet. Box 1328.

TALL, SLIM, f. graduate, unattd 50, sks good-natured, cheerful m. friend who likes theatre, gardening, museums, cricket, talking, sunny Sunday picnics, London area. Box 1440.

LONDONER, divorced, moving to Swansea— of which he knows nothing—seeks lively-minded, leftish woman in her 30s, who could show him the social and intellectual sights—if any. Box 1416.

GENTLEMAN, 60, married, emotionally unfulfilled, would like to meet lady similarly placed, 40-50. W. London pref. Box 1419.

I AM A SMALL, young-looking, slim, female history graduate, 37. Interested in films, plays, all kinds of music, reading, languages, travel, walking and sailing. I am looking for a kind man to enjoy some of these interests with, and perhaps a caring relationship too. Box 1424.

NOT TOO LATE FOR A VALENTINE—its still Spring! It would be nice to get a letter from an unknown man, if, like me he is enthusiastic about music, concert-going & enjoys painting. Mature in age & outlook, & lively-minded. It would be fun to hear from you. Please write to Box 1423.

DIVORCED LADY, three kids, researching singles scene would like to hear your experiences with small ads, singles groups and similar. Please write Box 1477.

BACHELOR, 40, R.C., educ., pleas. personality, sks attractive, intell., lady 25-34, mutual f/dship/support. S. Wales. Box 1460.

PRESENTABLE F. ex-writer (40, slim, fair, tallish) survivor of happy marriage now rebuilding career via science degree, seeks unattached contemp. m. company. Is there paragon, intelligent, outgoing, warm, funny, who would appreciate conversation, companionship and perhaps enjoys travel, theatre, arts, good food. Box 1456.

FEMININE, FRIENDLY Lecturer 51, Manchester based Scot; last fledgling stretching wings; now feels free to offer loyal sharing caring to mature successful prof. exec. with wide interests. Box 1455.

ATTRACTIVE, TALL, F. 38, solvent, educated, *non-smoker would appreciate* meeting an intelligent gentleman 40-55 initially for friendship, interested in the theatre, travel, conversation, Oxford. Box 1457.

TALL, PRESENTABLE, easy going teacher, 39, recently divorced, seeks attractive, feminine, unmaterialistic girl, with liking for books, music, wildlife and country pubs to help him turn his pleasant West Country house into a home. Box 1434.

I AM LOOKING for one man only. He must be capable of combining fun with loving, mind with body, family and home with personal growth and friends, idiocy with sense, elegance and quality of life with simplicity. Battle scarred divorcee still believes and hopes he exists in London/Home Counties. If this modus vivendi appeals contact Box 1430.

UNIV. SOCIAL SCIENTIST (f.), mid-thirties, now divorced, seeks left-wing m. for outings to films, plays, concerts (incig jazz). Box 1420.

OPTIMISTIC, affectionate, unatt. executive, 28, non-smoker, interests eclectic, would enjoy meeting warm, non-pretentious f. Eastern England. Box 1493.

DANISH GIRL (29) with 8 yrs old daughter, sks caring relationship with tall, good-looking male (academic/similar) with positive attitude to life. Likes literature, music, art, languages, sports. Box 1509.

AMY — attractive graduate, 30, divorced, loves the arts, countrylife, her children, laughter, seeking kind gentleman for beautiful, loving, lasting relationship/marriage. Box 1488.

LONDON: sophisticated widow, own flat, seeks articulate and secure m., late 60s, car owner. Box 1502.

LEFTISH educated male, 35, recently moved to lonely London, seeks lively lady to become social mate for the coming summer or longer. Box 1505.

NEEDED by woman, because she is a woman, a man, aged 40-50, capable of and prepared to form an emotionally responsible relationship. Essex/Kent area. Box 1506.

NUDISM. Good-humoured, well balanced, warm-hearted male, 40, seeks educated woman companion for occasional sun club visits in North-West Kent. Box 1514.

RESPONSIBLE ,tall, well spoken, travelled, educated lady, 40s, lives South Bucks, no ties, seeks companionship possibly marriage, with mature, good humoured, solvent gentleman 50s. Box 1576.

NOT WAVING but drowning. Ageing male, despairing years of celibacy from unfair shares of fates fetters. Problems perhaps soluble with help of attractive, experienced, co-operative female. Interests unimportant if only rescue contemplated. Pointless to seek lasting relationship unless circle can be broken. Box 1544.

MALE UNIV. LECTURER, 39, pleasant personality, well built, interested in the arts & politics, sks shapely woman, 25-36, with similar interests. Divorced or separated with children welcome. Pref. London/Home Counties. Box 1529.

WOMAN, TALL, happy, warm, cultivated, lives London, likes country, painting, friends, travelling, seeks all round man, country or London based. Box 1561.

MEDIUM DRY, slightly sparkling Chateau Oxon, f., well bottled, agreeable to discerning palate, seeks m. (not too vintage 50?) view possible re-labelling. Box 1570.

ATTRACTIVE, tall, vigorous male 50, returning from East on extended leave, seeks fun loving, attractive female companion under 35 to enliven his holiday in UK and Europe. Box 1559.

BALD, BEARDED engineer, 39, 6' 1", who likes life. Interests are politics, books, films and walking. Seeks woman with similar interests for occasional walk/drink/chat in London area. Box 1562.

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Manchester & Birmingham

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